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OF
OUR OWN TIMES

FROM 1880 TO
THE DIAMOND JUBILEE

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BY

JUSTIN McCARTHY

A NEW EDITION

LONDON
CHATTO & WINDUS
1901

PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO. LTD., NEW-STREET SQUARE
LONDON

PREFACE

THE first and second volumes of 'A History of Our Own Times' appeared in 1878. It had occurred to the author that one of the most difficult tasks for a young student just then was to get hold of the history of our own times. If anybody wanted to learn something of the facts concerning the reign of Elizabeth, or the reign of Anne, or the reign of George the Third, or the years of the great Reform Bill, there were standard books on every subject, which could be got at in every public library, and which indeed stood on the shelves of most men's private libraries; but, to make oneself acquainted with what had happened in the reign of Queen Victoria, there were only the interminable files of newspapers to consult, except, of course, for some special works dealing with particular chapters of history, such as the Crimean War or the Indian Mutiny. This was the want which the author of the History was anxious to supply, and he started upon his task with the conviction that there was no necessity for making

even contemporary history a dry record of facts and dates. A third and fourth volume were added to the story somewhat later, and the review of events passing within our own recollection was brought up to the crisis of 1880, when Mr. Gladstone, at the head of the Liberal Party, once more returned to power. The present supplemental volume takes up the story at that momentous epoch. Its object is to pass in review all that has happened in the affairs of the Empire from that time until the 'Diamond Jubilee' of the Queen's long reign; and it is hoped that it may be found worth reading for the sake of the events described in its pages, and even apart from any interest it might have as a successor to former volumes. That it is written without undue sway of party or partisan feeling, the author trusts that the general public, from knowledge of the previous volumes, may be kindly disposed to believe.

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A HISTORY
OF
OUR OWN TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW LIBERAL ADMINISTRATION.

In the early spring days of 1880 the Liberals, after a long exile from office, came back to power with a triumphant majority and with Mr. Gladstone as their leader.

Mr. Gladstone found himself confronted with the difficulty which meets every Prime Minister who has to form an Administration suddenly and after his party had long been shut out of office. This would be something of a difficulty in any case, and we have several highly humorous presentations of it in some of Mr. Disraeli's novels. Must we really have this man again? Can't we get rid of that man? Isn't it about time that such a person was going to the House of Lords? Would a baronetcy satisfy such another? Some of these new men *must* come in, or there will be a row in the country. The Whips insist that a place must be found for this or that rising man, but several of the risen men imply that they won't play any more if the rising man is brought into the

Administration. In 1880, however, the difficulty was much greater and more complicated than usual. Many changes had taken place during the retirement of Mr. Gladstone from the leadership of the Liberal party. New and serious responsibilities had been imposed upon the Liberal statesmen succeeding to power by the foreign policy of their Conservative predecessors. There were troubles in Western Asia, in Egypt, and in South Africa. The Liberals had inherited a war or two as yet unfinished. Some of the men who were most necessary to a strong Liberal Administration were in their hearts, and according to their repeated public professions, utterly opposed to any policy which aimed at the extension of territory or warlike enterprise of whatever kind. One of the first questions which came up to the lips of everyone was, What will John Bright think about Afghanistan, and Egypt, and South Africa? Yet, if it was doubtful whether Mr. Bright would consent to take office under such conditions, it was quite certain that a really strong Liberal Administration could not be formed without him just then.

There were home difficulties and home troubles as well. They came into the light at every popular meeting of Radicals, and were well known to all the provincial agents and managers of local parties. One fact was certain, beyond any possible question or doubt. That fact was, that the great bulk of the Radicals had long been weary of the leadership of Lord Hartington. There was nothing of the born leader about him. He could not lead—he could only

be pushed along to do his work. He had not sought the position of leader: it had been imposed upon him. He had accepted its obligations manfully, because there was no one else at hand to take them. He had done his very best to improve himself as a debater, and he had succeeded to a surprising degree. From being one of the worst speakers in the House of Commons he had drilled himself to become a really effective, and sometimes even a powerful, debater. But he could not lead. Mr. Chamberlain had publicly described him in the House of Commons as 'the late leader of the Opposition,' while he was still the titular successor to Mr. Gladstone. That was at the time when the Radicals, in conjunction with the Irish Nationalists, were making their great fight for the abolition of flogging in the army and the navy, and for a reform in the system of prison discipline. Lord Hartington moved forward in obedience to the goad, and did his best with the rest of the work for the time; but a leader who will not move without the goad is not likely to excite the enthusiasm of his followers. Therefore the very difficulty of dealing with Lord Hartington only made the Radicals more eager for forward movement under the guidance of Mr. Gladstone. Not much in the way of forward movement was expected any longer from Mr. Bright. The great popular tribune, although younger than Mr. Gladstone, was in feeble health and somewhat weary of battle. Moreover, he never had been an advocate of rapid change when once the great reforms to which he had devoted his eloquence and his energy

had been wholly or for the most part accomplished. Therefore all men, Liberals or Conservatives, looked upon Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain as the two strong pillars of Democracy in the reconstructed Liberal party. It was clear from the moment when Mr. Gladstone took office that one or other of these men must have a place in the Administration, if not actually in the Cabinet. Both Dilke and Chamberlain knew very well that most of Mr. Gladstone's older colleagues would do all they could to reduce to its lowest possibility the admission of the men who represented the new Radical element in political and social life.

Some of the appointments to the new Ministry were easy and obvious enough. There were excellent men ready for the posts—men who had proved their worth by service in former Administrations, men who could not in any case be overlooked. Lord Selborne became Lord Chancellor. He had been Solicitor-General and Attorney-General under former Liberal Administrations, and he might have been Lord Chancellor when Mr. Gladstone came back to power in 1868. But Sir Roundell Palmer (as he then was) could not see his way to a thorough acceptance of Mr. Gladstone's Irish Church policy. He had no objection to the disestablishment of the Irish State Church, but he could not stomach its disendowment. He was a man full of nice scruples. He was a theological politician, the theologian perhaps predominating over the politician. Later on, when Lord Hatherley resigned office, he became Lord Chancellor under Mr. Gladstone, and now becomes

Lord Chancellor again. His name was identified with many endeavours at useful and practical law reform, and he will always be remembered among the great lawyers of this country who were as strongly in favour of progress as Lord Eldon was in favour of standstill. He had been accounted at one time a power in the debates of the House of Commons, but in 1880 this fame had become a sort of tradition, the foundation of which young and sceptical members were inclined to question. It is needless to explain that there is a fashion in Parliamentary debate, as there is in dress and in social usage, and it is enough, perhaps, to say that Sir Roundell Palmer's style had gone out of fashion. But he was unquestionably a man of great ability, a man of the highest character, a man of the most exalted purpose. The Duke of Argyll was naturally offered a seat in Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet. For the third time he became Lord Privy Seal. The Duke of Argyll could hardly be called a very stable politician. He had a little too much of the essayist and the small philosopher in him to be a stalwart political figure. But he was one of the finest speakers in the House of Lords, a master of phrase and polish and rounded sentence; just the sort of orator that an old-fashioned French Academician would be sure to admire. Such a man was of value to an Administration like Mr. Gladstone's, although even when he accepted office there were some people who thought that he was not likely to get on very well with the new Radical principles, and that he probably would not

long hold his place in the Cabinet. Lord Kimberley, a safe and steady-going man, also joined the new Administration as Secretary of State for the Colonies. Mr. Fawcett was appointed Postmaster-General. Mr. Fawcett's remarkable career, pursued so patiently under such cruel difficulties, has been described already in this History. He would no doubt have been received into the Cabinet but for his blindness. It was thought impossible to accept as a Cabinet minister a man who had to be indebted to the eyes of others for an exposition of the contents of the most confidential and secret despatches. Sir William Harcourt became Home Secretary. He had long since made up his mind to renounce any career that might come from his profession as a lawyer. Mr. Childers, Mr. Mundella, Sir Henry James, and Mr. Dodson, afterwards raised to the peerage as Lord Monk-Bretton, had places in the new Administration. Mr. Grant Duff, who had formerly been Under-Secretary for India, became Under-Secretary for the Colonies. At that time Mr. Grant Duff was still held to be a man who had the possibility of a great career before him. He was not eloquent, and he had not the voice for eloquence; but he was a man of intellect and a man of thought, and he had studied European politics, partly as a political philosopher, partly as a traveller, and partly as a *flâneur*. He wrote a book, called 'Studies in European Politics,' which made at the time a great mark on the minds of thinking men, and some chapters of which foreshadowed with prophetic instinct the rearrangements which would have to

be made in the European dominions of the Ottoman Porte. When the war between France and Prussia broke out in 1870, Mr. Cardwell, then Minister for War, declared in the lobby of the House of Commons that it meant the French in Berlin in six weeks. Mr. Grant Duff, on the other hand, maintained that it meant the Germans in Paris in six months. Mr. Grant Duff, however, did not go so far as most people expected. After a while he gave up the House of Commons, and accepted the office of Lieutenant-Governor of Madras on the death of Mr. William Adam, once a Liberal Whip, and the only man who distinctly foresaw, and figured up, and announced in advance the signal victory of the Liberals in 1880. Mr. Forster was made Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. In the minds of English Liberals and of Irish Nationalists alike this seemed at the moment a very hopeful appointment. Mr. Forster had been in strong sympathy with Ireland and with Irish men. His father and he had rendered signal personal service to the Irish peasantry during the famine of 1846 and 1847. He was the brother-in-law of Matthew Arnold, whose Celtic sympathies were part of his nature, and informed and suffused his poetry. Mr. Forster had a seat in the Cabinet, for it was easily understood that he was not likely to be a mere subordinate instrument in the work of other men. One possible difficulty in Mr. Gladstone's way was removed by the personal action of Lord Lytton, the Viceroy of India. Lord Lytton was a man of high intellect, of charming poetic and literary gifts, a

fascinating talker, a delightful companion. But he was inspired by all Lord Beaconsfield's theories and dreams about the extension of our Indian Empire. No one knew precisely what he wanted to have done in India, just as no one knew what Lord Beaconsfield had in his mind to accomplish there. But it was clear to all reasonable men that a great Eastern empire could not be established by talking the language of Marlowe's Tamburlaine, or incessantly calling out, with trumpet accompaniment of hyperbolical phraseology, 'Go to! Let us make ourselves the supreme Oriental Power.' Lord Lytton saw, of course, that with the fall of Lord Beaconsfield had come up a more prosaic and less perilous time for Indian Viceroys. He resigned his post, and was succeeded by Lord Ripon.

It required some courage on the part of Mr. Gladstone to make Lord Ripon Viceroy of India. For Lord Ripon had lately committed an offence which, in the minds at least of some influential Englishmen, was absolutely unpardonable: he had become a Roman Catholic. Some even of the Radical newspapers expressed a doubt as to whether a public man who had shown himself thus out of touch with the great majority of the English, Scottish, and Welsh people was the best who could be found for such a place as that of Indian Viceroy. Mr. Gladstone, however, took no account of such criticisms, coming from friend or enemy. Lord Ripon went out to India. His career as Viceroy created a passionate controversy here and in India,

but this much, at least, may be said for him at once—that if the feelings and the judgment of the native populations are to be taken into any account, their feelings and their judgment undoubtedly approved and endorsed Lord Ripon's administration.

Except for Lord Ripon's appointment there was nothing, so far, which put any real difficulty in Mr. Gladstone's way, and even Lord Ripon's appointment did not cause him one moment's hesitation. The serious trouble was as to the manner in which the Radicals of the Liberal party were to be represented in the new Administration. The days of Lord Palmerston had quite gone by. The suffrage had been largely extended. The working classes all over the country had been endowed with a quite new power. There had been political organisation and trade organisation everywhere. Even amongst agricultural labourers there had been, as we have seen already, an uprising of political agitation and an ordering of ranks for political purposes. No Liberal statesman could possibly fail to take account of the movement in town and village: the movement of Hodge, as well as of Alton Locke, Kingsley's tailor hero.

During Mr. Gladstone's retirement from the leadership of the Liberal party many personal changes had been showing themselves in political life, both on his side of the field and on that of his Parliamentary adversaries. New men had been coming to the front—and not merely new men, but, it might quite fairly be said, new groups or sections or parties. On the Liberal side there had been a

sudden and a powerful strain towards advanced Radicalism. Two of the most influential among the rising Liberals were Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain. We have had occasion to say something about Sir Charles Dilke in the fourth volume of this History. We have heard him avow himself a Republican in theory; and although more lately he suppressed his Republicanism, he had never repudiated it, nor was he even supposed to have renounced it. He merely put it away because he was an eminently practical politician, and he saw clearly that if ever the question of a republic was to come up in the England of his time, it certainly had not come up just then, and was not likely to come up soon. He continued to be an advanced Radical and to carry his Radical principles into practical action. He was a man of great ability and indomitable force of character. He was not eloquent in the richer sense of the word, for he had no imagination and no gift of 'phrasing'; but he was a most self-possessed, dogged, and formidable debater, and he took care to speak only on subjects with which he was thoroughly acquainted. He had an intimate knowledge of home politics and parties, and probably no other man in the House of Commons knew nearly so much of foreign and colonial affairs. He had been an immense traveller, and he had travelled with a purpose. Burke spoke of Howard as having made a circumnavigation of philanthropy. Sir Charles Dilke had made many a circumnavigation of personal instruction. No question of foreign or colonial policy could well come up in the House

of Commons about which he was not able to say: 'I know the place; I know the conditions; I know the men.' He was as much at home in Asia, Africa, America, and Australasia as he was in any of the capitals of Europe. He had carried the Red Cross of Geneva over many a stricken field. Once in the House of Commons he was speaking on some military subject. He was expressing an earnest opinion, a little dogmatic, perhaps, when he was interrupted rather contemptuously by a military officer, a member of the Tory party, who seemed to be annoyed at the idea of a mere civilian presuming to offer any opinion on such a question. 'May I assure the honourable and gallant general,' Dilke said, quite composedly, 'that I have seen more battlefields than he has ever seen.' Dilke had put himself at the head of the Radical democracy of the metropolis, and he was looked up to with confidence and admiration by the working men of Great Britain. He was on the most cordial terms with the Irish Home Rule party, and avowed himself frankly to be in favour of Home Rule for Ireland. Nothing could be more natural for a man who had seen on the spot what Home Rule had done for Canada, for the Australasian colonies, and for South Africa. Nothing could be more clear than the fact that Sir Charles Dilke must be reckoned with in the construction of the new Liberal Government. The regular old-stagers of Liberal Administrations were a good deal disconcerted by the look of things; but the days of the mere Whigs were done. To most of them Gladstone seemed far too rapid and

forward in his movements; but then it was clear that they could not do without Gladstone, and must even take him as he was. Yet it seemed a little hard to have to put up with Dilke and with Chamberlain.

For Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was one of the strong men without whom the new Liberal party could not hope to get on. Mr. Chamberlain had what may fairly be called a great reputation, in its way, before he became a member of the House of Commons. His was, however, altogether a provincial, and for the most part a municipal, reputation. He had acquired a kind of fame as a municipal administrator of Birmingham, then as now one of the best-managed cities in England. But he was known as a politician also, and he was understood to be one of the most advanced of advanced Radicals. The notion of the average Tory or Whig member of the House of Commons was that Chamberlain's main object in life was to overthrow, first the Throne, and then the altar, or first the altar and then the Throne —the honest average Tory or Whig did not pledge himself to the exact order of succession. When Mr. Chamberlain was first elected to the House of Commons, in 1876, his very appearance, and still more his maiden speech, astonished most of his political opponents. They expected a Boanerges in outlandish costume; they found a quiet, soft-spoken, well-dressed and dapper gentleman. Mr. Chamberlain soon proved himself to be one of the keenest and most formidable debaters in the House. He had a clear, incisive voice, which he never had occa-

sion to strain in order to make himself heard over all the benches; he had a perfect self-control, and showed when interrupted a great readiness of repartee. He had none of the imagination which goes to the making of an orator, and his reading was too limited to allow him to bring up that apt illustration from history and from literature which tells so well in the House of Commons. But the whole House felt at once that what Mr. Rudyard Kipling calls 'a first-class fighting-man' had been added to its ranks, and he was, therefore, cordially welcomed, even by those who most thoroughly dreaded and detested what were then understood to be his political opinions. Mr. Chamberlain, too, was a man with whom it was absolutely necessary for Mr. Gladstone to reckon.

Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain were great friends and allies. Their policy was understood to represent the high-water mark of what may be called Radicalism, as distinct from Socialism. Even on the question of Irish Home Rule it was understood that they were in general agreement. There was a certain difference, as one of the two explained to a friend on an important occasion. Sir Charles Dilke was convinced that Home Rule for Ireland was a thing actually desirable in itself—that it would be for the good of Ireland and for the good of Great Britain too. Mr. Chamberlain was for trying to satisfy Ireland by giving her a full and fair share of all the advantages which Great Britain possessed, but if all that did not bring about a per-

fect union, he was prepared to go the full length of Home Rule. Both men were in constant and cordial alliance with the Home Rule party in the House of Commons. The Home Rulers and the Radicals had fought many a fight side by side on the South African policy of the Tory Government, on prison discipline, and, as has been already said, on flogging in the army and the navy. It was the humour of the House of Commons at that time to call Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General for the Irish Nationalist party. Therefore there was a great strength of English democracy and of Irish Nationalism behind Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain. It was believed at the time, and with very good reason, that Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain had entered into an understanding that neither of them would take office of any kind unless one or other were offered a seat in the Cabinet. Nothing could be more justifiable, and from every point of view more honourable, than such an agreement. It was impossible that men like Dilke and Chamberlain could take any share in the forming of a new Administration which left the rising Radical party without a representative in the Cabinet. In the natural course of things it might have seemed that Sir Charles Dilke, who had been for several years in the House, should have had the first claim. But we believe it was Dilke's own desire and determination that Chamberlain should be pressed forward. Accordingly, Mr. Chamberlain was brought into the Cabinet as President of the Board of Trade, and Sir

Charles Dilke became Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Bright consented to join the Administration as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. He had occupied the same position before. On the former occasion, as on the later, it had been a strong wish of Mr. Gladstone that Mr. Bright should accept one of the great secretaryships in the Administration. Each time, however, Mr. Bright felt compelled to decline the offer. His condition of health had been for many years a trouble to him. He could only consent to take a place which involved comparatively little work and still less responsibility. Lord Granville, youthful and buoyant as ever, although in his sixty-fifth year, once more became Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Two noted names were absent from the list of ministers. One was that of Mr. Stansfeld, who had held important office before, and who had been one of the foremost of the younger Radical party in the days when it yet had all its work to do. Mr. Stansfeld's first speech in the House of Commons had won a genial tribute of praise from Mr. Disraeli, who, no matter how he might disagree with a man's political opinions, had always a genuine zeal for the recognition of rising talent. Mr. Stansfeld had held various offices in Liberal Administrations. He had been a Junior Lord of the Admiralty in 1863, and he resigned the post a year after because of the absurd and grotesque attack made upon him in the House of Commons on the ground of his intimacy with Mazzini. We have

already told the story. He was made a Lord of the Treasury when Mr. Gladstone came into office in 1868, and he succeeded Mr. Goschen as President of the Poor Law Board in 1871. When the new Local Government Board was created, in August 1871, he was made its President, and he held that position until Mr. Gladstone's resignation in 1874. In all these various offices he obtained the credit of being a working administrator of the first class. In the House of Commons he was a powerful and an eloquent debater, and his personal character was of the highest order. He was sincere, self-sacrificing, heroic, sometimes even to a quixotic degree. He had one persistent enemy—ill-health. He could not always command his physical energies, and bring them to work, as his mind was able to do; nor would he ever spare himself; many of his friends thought that he worked only too hard. However, he returned to office later on; and meanwhile the Liberal Government then formed could count on no supporter more loyal to Liberal and Radical policy than Mr. Stansfeld.

Another man who disappeared at once from office and the House of Commons was Mr. Robert Lowe. Mr. Lowe was made Lord Sherbrooke, and vanished in the House of Lords. No assembly could have been less sympathetic to his peculiar nature and his way of thinking; for although he had spoken with contempt of 'the people who live in those small houses,' he loved brilliancy and sparkle in the occupants of any house whatever, and he found not much of these in the House of Lords. On the day

when the report of his elevation to the peerage appeared in the morning papers he met a friend, a member of the House of Commons, in a West-end London street. The friend asked him, somewhat timidly, if it was true that he was about to become a peer, and, if so, whether he, the friend, ought to congratulate him. Lowe answered, not without a certain tone of acerbity: 'It is true I am going into the House of Lords, but I should have thought you would know better than to talk of offering me any congratulation.' Lord Sherbrooke never tried to make any figure in the House of Lords. His day was done. He died not very long after he had become a peer. His short-lived fame is already fading in the public mind. But he will always be remembered by readers of English Parliamentary history as one 'who blazed the comet of a season.'

The familiar face of Mr. Goschen was missed for a time in the House of Commons. Mr. Goschen had rendered zealous service to the British bondholders in Egypt when, with the French delegate, M. Joubert, he went out in 1876 to concert measures for the conversion of the debt. Immediately after Mr. Gladstone's return to office in 1880, he was sent out to Constantinople as Ambassador-Extraordinary, in order to press for the execution of unfulfilled promises made by the Porte in the Treaty of Berlin.

We may as well dispose of this part of our story at once. The claims which the Porte had not satisfied, and apparently was not even thinking about satisfying, were those of the Montenegrins for the

cession of the port of Dulcigno, on the Adriatic, which had been assigned to them by the Treaty of Berlin, and the possession of which was almost essential to the continued existence of the plucky little State; and the demand of Greece for the cession of Thessaly and a general rectification of frontier, also promised by the Treaty. Turkey delayed and delayed about the cession of Dulcigno, and the port was at one time actually occupied by the Albanians, who forestalled the Montenegrins, the Turkish Government having withdrawn their troops, and making no attempt to interfere. Then Mr. Gladstone induced the Great Powers who had signed the Treaty of Berlin to make a concerted demonstration of warships in the Adriatic. This 'naval demonstration,' as it was called, was the subject of much merriment all over Europe. Still, it seems to have had its effect. The Turkish Government took the demonstration seriously in the end, and sent a force to turn the Albanians out of Dulcigno, which was accordingly handed over to Montenegro. Greece, too, after much diplomatic delay and many popular demonstrations and calls for warlike action by the populace of Athens, obtained the settlement of her claims; and with the cession of territory and the rectification of frontier came the almost complete disappearance of brigandage from the Kingdom of the Hellenes. The Turkish frontier was up to that time far too easily and quickly reached and crossed by the brigands in the regions where brigandage drove its best trade.

CHAPTER II.

THE BRADLAUGH EPISODE.

Among the new men whom the general election brought into the House of Commons on the Liberal side, the two most remarkable were Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Bradlaugh. Mr. Labouchere, indeed, could not be called in the strict sense a new member, for he had been in the House of Commons twice before: once when he sat for Windsor, and later when he sat for Middlesex. But he had only held a seat in the House for a short season each time, and had not taken much pains to make a great figure in politics—had only given proof that he was a very advanced Radical indeed for that period of political growth. He was a nephew of Lord Taunton, the 'H. Labouchere' Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of O'Connell's time, and he was understood to have inherited his uncle's fortune. He had been in the diplomatic service in various parts of the world, and was believed to have made a keen study of men and manners wherever he went. He had a taste for journalism, and had founded a paper named *Truth*, which quickly became at once a brilliant and a solid success; and in it he expressed his own opinions with

an utter disregard for the supposed trammels of party. He had undoubtedly rendered many times a great public service by his fearless exposure of various commercial and charitable shams and frauds, and the threat of an action never had any other effect on him than to make him repeat the charge and invite his menacer to a court of law. He usually expressed his opinions, both in and out of the House of Commons, in the form of satire and sarcasm. He had inherited a marvellous gift of humour, perhaps from some of his French Huguenot ancestors, and many solemn Englishmen could not quite believe in the political sincerity of one who made so many good jokes.

Mr. Bradlaugh was a man of a different mould and a very different bringing-up. Poverty cowered over his early years. He had been an office-boy; he had been a coal-dealer in a very small way; he had been a trooper in the 7th Dragoon Guards; he had been clerk to a firm of solicitors, during which occupation he had picked up a great practical knowledge of law, which afterwards served him in good stead; and he became a public lecturer, and started a newspaper for the expression of his own very peculiar opinions on religion. He was a man of great ability, an indomitable hard-worker, and he taught himself much more than he could possibly have learned at the one or two elementary schools which he attended. He loved reading; he loved poetry and music; and he acquired a knowledge of several languages. He was very popular as a lecturer on political and social questions, and under

the assumed and transparent disguise of the name 'Iconoclast' he made himself notorious as an advocate of atheistic principles. He had passed through the fire of many a court of law in his determination to set himself against the tenets of Christianity, and, indeed, of every religion known to human beings. It would be needless to say that he made for himself hosts of public enemies wherever he went; it would be unfair not to say, too, that he was followed by hosts of admiring friends. Nature had given him a powerful voice and a very commanding presence. He had stood for a Parliamentary constituency several times, but without success until the general election of 1880, when he was returned for Northampton as a colleague of Mr. Labouchere.

Few men in modern days have entered the House of Commons for the first time heralded by just such a notoriety as that which preceded Mr. Bradlaugh. His name and his career were well known to everybody. His battles with the law courts would alone have been enough to make him an object of intense curiosity. Many men in the House of Commons —probably the majority there—were inclined to resent his coming among them as an intrusion and an insult. To add to his unpopularity, there were stories persistently repeated of him which ascribed to him a course of action at a public meeting which, if the stories were true, would have been simply blasphemy run mad. They were not true—there was not a word of truth in them. Their untruth was proved over and over again in courts

of law. But some persons still insisted on believing the tale, and insisted on believing it to the end. At the time of Mr. Bradlaugh's election it had a great effect in swelling the cry of indignation at the idea of such a man becoming a member of the House of Commons. Everybody knew that a storm was coming; probably not many anticipated just such a storm as that which came.

On Thursday, April 29, 1880, the new Parliament was opened by Commission. The first business of every Parliament is, of course, the election of a Speaker of the House of Commons, for without a Speaker nothing can be done. Mr. Henry Brand was elected to the chair without opposition, and had, we may assume, little anticipation of the troublous time through which he would have to pass. After the election of Speaker the House met for several days for the purpose of swearing in the members and the issuing of new writs for the seats which had been vacated by men who had accepted office under the Crown since their election, and to provide for double returns in the case—which happens often at a general election—when one man is chosen for two constituencies. In such a case the man thus doubly favoured makes known to the Speaker his choice of a seat, and a writ has to be issued to fill the vacancy in the other constituency. As a general rule, nothing can be less dignified or less interesting than the proceedings of the House of Commons during these few days. The new members come in whenever they like, and in what order they can, to be sworn in or

to affirm. At the opening of a new Parliament no member is introduced. There is no one to introduce him. He is of the same date as all the rest. The great anxiety of each member is to get sworn in as fast as he can, and be done with the whole formality. Members are usually sworn in groups or batches of four or five. One copy of the New Testament does service for each little cluster. There is at times a somewhat unseemly scramble for a copy of the Testament, and when some little group has got hold of one, and an opportunity offers, the swearing in of that group takes place. Some words are muttered. The words of late years are: 'I do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, her heirs and successors, according to law; so help me God.' Each member mutters over the same words, each puts his lips to the Testament, and the ceremony is complete. This performance goes on for the whole day until the time fixed for adjournment has arrived; and it goes on day after day. No one takes any interest in it except the members who are still waiting to be sworn; and even their interest is only represented by their personal anxiety to get through the ordeal at the first possible moment and go away. Such a time is, as a general rule, almost the only time in the House of Commons when nothing exciting could possibly be expected.

It was otherwise, however, with the opening of Parliament in 1880. On the third day of the session Mr. Bradlaugh presented himself at the table of the House, and handed to one of the clerks a written

claim to be allowed to make a solemn affirmation instead of taking the oath. The Speaker called on Mr. Bradlaugh to state his reason for making such a claim. Mr. Bradlaugh replied that the Parliamentary Oaths Act of 1866 gave the right to affirm to every person for the time being permitted by law to make affirmation. 'I am such a person,' he pleaded, 'and I have repeatedly for nine years past affirmed in the highest courts of jurisdiction in this realm.' 'I am ready,' he added, 'to make the declaration or affirmation of allegiance.' The Speaker would not take it on himself to decide the question, but submitted it to the judgment of the House. Perhaps this was an unfortunate decision. Perhaps it would have been better to allow Mr. Bradlaugh to make the affirmation at his own risk, and let anyone who thought fit sue him in a court of law for the statutory penalties provided by law against anyone who sat and voted in the House of Commons without the proper legal qualification. The Speaker's decision, or rather refusal to give a decision, was, indeed, the letting out of the waters. The House was taken thoroughly by surprise. No leading member of the Government was present. Indeed, most of the leading members of the Government had, for the time, ceased to be members of the House. Lord Frederick Cavendish, who held a subordinate office, moved the appointment of a select committee to consider and report as to the construction of the statutes on which Mr. Bradlaugh rested his claim. There was some discussion, more or less at random, over

this proposition, but the proposal was finally agreed to. There was discussion again over the numbers and the nomination of the committee, and at last it became evident that the whole subject was to be turned to account by certain opponents of the Government for the distinct purpose of embarrassing the Liberal Administration at the very outset of its career.

As the wrangle—for at this time it was only a wrangle—went on it grew more and more apparent that the chance afforded by Mr. Bradlaugh's action had been the impulse to the formation of a new Parliamentary party. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff led at first the opposition to the appointment of the committee and led the whole of the operations designed to embarrass the Liberal Government. Sir Henry Wolff had been for some time in Parliament, but had not made, or even tried to make, any conspicuous figure there. He was a man of decided ability, who had been well trained in diplomacy and had a varied knowledge of foreign countries and foreign courts, and was acquainted better than most men with that perennial source of modern trouble which is called the Eastern Question. He was son of the famous missionary, traveller, and scholar, Dr. Wolff, at one time honoured by all the world for the fearless and determined, although unsuccessful, efforts he made to rescue the captive English officers, Colonel Stoddart and Captain Connolly, in Bokhara—a sad tale, told in an earlier volume of this History. Sir Henry Wolff was above all things a fighting politician. He prob-

ably did not care three straws whether Mr. Bradlaugh was or was not allowed to affirm, or, indeed, whether Mr. Bradlaugh was to be permitted to enter the House of Commons or was to be kept out of it. But he saw a splendid opportunity for harassing not only the leaders of the Government, but likewise the leaders of the Opposition, by seizing on the first chance of obstruction. Lord Randolph Churchill came to his aid so readily that it seemed rather uncertain at first which was to be the leader and which was to be the follower. But the energy and the 'masterful' ways of Lord Randolph Churchill soon made it clear that he was to command and Sir Henry Wolff to obey.

Lord Randolph Churchill had been in the House for some years, but up to this time he had made no impression on it. He had spoken occasionally, and once, at least, very well; but he was listened to chiefly because he was the son of the Duke of Marlborough and bore an illustrious, historic name, and most people wished him success in any career he chose to adopt. Little by little the opportunities given by the wranglings over Mr. Bradlaugh inspired Lord Randolph with the idea of forming a new party, 'all of his own and none of his neighbours,' as an old Scottish proverb used to say. Usually there were only two parties in the House, the Liberals and the Tories, or the Government and the Opposition. More lately the Irish Nationalists had won recognition for themselves as the Third party. Now came Lord Randolph with his new group, having its distinct individual purpose, and it claimed to be recognised

as the Fourth party. It was, indeed, in more than one sense a Fourth party, because it was a party of four. Lord Randolph was the general, and the army consisted of Sir Henry Wolff, Mr. Arthur James Balfour, and Mr. Gorst, now Sir John Gorst. What was the purpose of the Fourth party? As it gradually developed itself it became apparent that Lord Randolph Churchill had some notion of reviving and embodying in practical form Mr. Disraeli's idea of a Tory Democrat. But this purpose only revealed itself gradually, perhaps was only shaped gradually, for Lord Randolph's first impulse was merely to harass with impartial energy the leaders of the Government and the leaders of the Opposition. He made war upon the Liberals, of course—that was part of his political creed and his political business. But his youthful ardour revolted against the slow-going, jog-trot, prosaic action of his own titular leaders. The suavity, moderation, and methodical movement of men like Sir Stafford Northcote and Mr. Cross set him wild. Such men had no 'go' in them, he thought, and he became possessed with a passion to make them 'sit up,' according to a slang phrase not yet wholly out of date. The other members of his party may have had, to begin with, the same motives. Probably Mr. Arthur Balfour found some amusement in the whole thing; perhaps others, like Hamlet, lacked advancement. Anyhow, the one fact certain was that the party did form itself and did become, small as its numbers were, a power in the House of Commons. Had Mr. Bradlaugh not begun his Par-

liamentary career by claiming a right to affirm instead of taking the oath no one can tell when the Fourth party might have been formed, or whether, indeed, it might have been formed at all.

Meanwhile the discussion and debating over Mr. Bradlaugh's claim went on. The committee was appointed by a large majority, the Fourth party objecting to everything suggested from either of the front benches, and generally making things uncomfortable for everybody. The committee reported against Mr. Bradlaugh's claim to be allowed to affirm. But its decision was carried by only a casting-vote of the chairman, and it was by no means certain that the House would have adopted the finding of the committee under such conditions. Mr. Bradlaugh, however, did not wait for any decision from the House. In a letter to the newspapers he announced that as the committee had decided against his claim to be allowed to affirm, he had made up his mind to come to the table of the House and take the oath. He added that he felt bound to act on the mandate of his constituents, who had sent him to the House of Commons, and that he would do so, even though he should have to submit to a form less solemn to him than the affirmation he would have reverently made, and to repeat words which to him were sounds conveying no clear and definite meaning. He declared, however, that if he were permitted to take the oath he would regard himself as bound, not by the letter of its words, but by the spirit which the affirmation would have conveyed, had he been allowed to make

it. In conformity with the terms of that announcement Mr. Bradlaugh, a day or two after, presented himself at the table of the House, evidently for the purpose of taking the oath. Thereupon Sir Henry Wolff sprang to his feet and interposed. He objected to the administration of the oath under such conditions, and Mr. Bradlaugh was ordered to withdraw from the House while the subject was under debate. Sir Henry Wolff's argument was simply to the effect that Mr. Bradlaugh, having proclaimed himself an Atheist, was not entitled to take an oath. Mr. Gladstone raised the question whether the House of Commons was by law, or custom, or precedent of any kind, entitled to prevent a duly elected member from taking the oath which the law itself prescribed. Mr. Gladstone therefore moved for the appointment of a select committee to consider and report on that particular part of the whole subject. Then the flood of discussion rose high once more. Sir Henry Wolff had the satisfaction of seeing the leader of the Opposition, Sir Stafford Northcote, going into the lobby in favour of the Fourth party's motion. For it was the Fourth party's motion distinctly. It used to be said in the House at the time—and the story is not without foundation—that Lord Randolph Churchill 'called to his nearest follower, or henchman': 'We have got hold of a good thing—let us stick to it.' To do them justice they did stick to it accordingly. The business of the House stood still for the time, and Lord Randolph and his merry men were particularly happy.

There were now three distinct questions involved,

which kept running in and out of each other all the time, and perplexing the scruples and the consciences of men. Two were of minor degree and importance. These were: first, whether a man might be allowed to affirm who had objected to take the oath on the ground that some of the words it contained—the words 'So help me God!'—had for him no manner of meaning; and second, whether a man who had objected at first to taking the oath ought to be allowed to change his mind and take the oath after all. But the great question really disturbing the minds of serious men was, whether a professing and proclaimed Atheist ought to be allowed to sit in the House of Commons. No one argued that an Atheist ought not to be allowed to sit in the House—that is, no one contended that there ought to be a religious inquisition by Mr. Speaker, or by anybody else, of each elected representative in order to find out how far he had gone in the way of free-thought. Every one knew that there were Atheists, according to the common understanding of the term, in every House of Commons. But the question was whether a man who proclaimed himself an Atheist ought to be allowed to sit in the House. There was an irritated feeling with many men that Bradlaugh had made a needless fuss about his opinions, and that as he was willing to take the oath then, he ought to have taken it in the first instance, and said nothing at all about it. Many men pointed to the example of John Stuart Mill, who had taken the oath without protest, and they asked angrily, if what was good enough for

Stuart Mill was not quite good enough for Bradlaugh. But the cases were entirely different. Mill had never proclaimed himself an Atheist, and in point of fact never was an Atheist in Mr. Bradlaugh's sense of the word. Mill was in all his sympathies a Christian, although he could not identify himself with any one form of Christian faith. He had no more conscientious objection to taking the Parliamentary oath than he would have had to taking off his hat on entering St. Paul's Cathedral in London or St. Peter's in Rome. But Bradlaugh was a convinced and an aggressive Atheist, the organiser of a propaganda of atheism, and his followers would have been amazed indeed if their leader had hauled down his flag and consented to take the oath without even a word of protest.

Mr. Gladstone's motion for a committee was accepted after a prolonged discussion, in which Mr. Bright took an important part. Mr. Bright, about whose religious convictions there could be no possible doubt, appealed to the House to discuss the whole question of Mr. Bradlaugh's claim as a question of right and of law, and not to regard it solely as a matter of each individual's sectarian views. Mr. Bright pointed out that the oath had been modified to meet the conscientious views of Roman Catholics and to satisfy the demands of the Jews. Still further back, as he showed, the Quakers, whose religious scruples did not allow them to take an oath, had been permitted by law to make an affirmation. Mr. Bright dwelt with impressive emphasis on the

difficulty and danger attending a conflict between the House of Commons and some resolute constituency. He referred to the case of John Wilkes; he might also have referred to the case of Lord Cochrane. Mr. Gladstone's motion was adopted in the end. The committee was appointed. Mr. Bradlaugh pleaded his own case before the committee, and submitted himself to cross-examination. He maintained that he had never said the oath would not be binding on his conscience; he had only said that it would not bind him more firmly than his conscience would be bound by an affirmation. He only objected to the oath because it contained certain words which, he declared, conveyed to his mind no clear and definite meaning. The committee, after prolonged sittings, announced by a large majority the opinion that Mr. Bradlaugh could not be allowed to take the oath, but added a recommendation that he should be permitted to affirm at his own risk, subject to any legal penalties which might be consequent upon his sitting and voting in the House without the proper statutory qualification.

The recommendation was rejected by a majority of the House, a majority of forty-five, and it was declared that Mr. Bradlaugh must not be allowed either to affirm or to take the oath. The majority of those who voted for this resolution did so, either avowedly or impliedly, on the ground that a professed and proclaimed Atheist ought not to be allowed to sit in the House of Commons. Several of the Irish Home Rule members declared publicly in the House that such

was their conscientious conviction. On the other hand, Mr. Parnell and two or three of his followers spoke and voted in favour of Mr. Bradlaugh's being allowed to take the oath. Mr. Bradlaugh presented himself again at the table of the House, and asserted his right to be sworn in. He was ordered to withdraw, but before withdrawing he asked to be heard at the Bar of the House. The House agreed to this request, some of those who had been most strong against his claim to take the oath being equally strong and outspoken in support of his claim to be heard in his own defence. He was heard at the Bar. The Bar of the House is a real entity, and not an imaginary line like the Equator. It is made up of a sort of double-sided brass cylinder, which is brought to meet across the floor of the House beside the chair of the Serjeant-at-Arms. Leaning on this bar, Mr. Bradlaugh addressed the House in a speech of about twenty minutes' length, which undoubtedly impressed everyone who listened to it; and the House, as might have been expected, was crowded to excess. Mr. Bradlaugh had, as has been said, a commanding presence. His form almost approached the gigantic, and he had a broad intellectual forehead. His voice was very powerful and resonant. It could be heard over any assembly, and although in some notes it was strident and brassy, yet it had shades of softer and of musical tone. It was as strong as the voice of Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Bright; but it had not the flexibility, the marvellous variety, and the exquisite beauty of either voice. Mr. Bradlaugh pleaded his

case manfully, insisted that he had done nothing to warrant his exclusion, and strongly appealed to the Government and the whole House of Commons against any course of action which might lead to a conflict with the constituents of Northampton.

It cannot be doubted that Mr. Bradlaugh favourably impressed the great majority of those who listened to him; but no impression, favourable or otherwise, made by the orator just then could seriously affect the decision of the House. Mr. Bradlaugh was ordered to withdraw after the resolve of the House had been declared concerning his claim to take the oath, and he refused to obey. He was removed by the Serjeant-at-Arms, but instantly walked into the House again, declaring that he admitted no right on the part of the majority to exclude him from its benches. He was then taken into custody by the Serjeant-at-Arms and lodged in the Clock Tower. Next day, however, he was released, and the House resolved, on the motion of Mr. Gladstone, that every person claiming to be permitted by law to make an affirmation should be allowed to do so, subject to any liability by statute. This resolution broke the controversy into two separate channels. There was the dispute in the House of Commons and the dispute in the courts of law. We need not follow the story through all its wearisome details. Some of its passages were ludicrous, and even farcical; some were grave, odious, and lamentable. Mr. Bradlaugh kept on making little rushes at the House of Commons.

Every now and then he ran unexpectedly up the floor, and made for the table in front of the Speaker's chair, and clutched the Testament, in the hope of being sworn in or with the view of swearing himself in. Then the Serjeant-at-Arms and the Deputy-Serjeant sprang after him, and seized him at the table. Each caught him by either arm, and thus seized he consented to be led back again to the Bar of the House. The moment the officials released his arms he started off again on his run to the table. Then the officials toiled after him once more, and again he was led back to the Bar of the House; and again, on being released, he made for the table as before. Anything more ludicrous, anything more ignoble, anything more degrading to the character of a great Parliamentary assembly could hardly be imagined. Once the struggle assumed that grimmer and more lamentable character to which we have already referred. Time was going on, and the fight was still kept up. Mr. Bradlaugh was for a while excluded from the House itself—that is, from the benches of the Chamber—but he was allowed to sit in one of the rows of seats which are nearly on a level with the floor of the House. There he occupied what an Irish member called 'an enjoyable nook,' where he could hear all the debates without having to trouble himself by taking a part in them. Meanwhile he was again and again expelled from the House, or at least declared incapable of sitting and voting there; and again and again he resigned his seat, and on all such occasions he sought re-election, and was immediately

re-elected by his constituents. He was sued every other day for penalties in a court of law because during some of the intervals after he had been permitted to affirm he had sat and voted in the House. It began to seem after a while as if the burden of penalties and costs imposed upon him must grow to something like the amount of the National Debt.

On one occasion an order was made that Mr. Bradlaugh should be removed from the precincts of the House. He declared his determination to resist the order, and he was actually dragged and driven out of the House by the force of ten policemen. He had presented himself in the lobby, and was about to enter the House itself, when the order was given by the officials for his removal. He was forced down the flights of winding stone steps which lead from the central lobby to the private entrance of members. He was, as has been said, a man of extraordinary physical strength, and he fought like one desperate. The ten policemen had all their work to do in forcing and dragging him down the flights of steps. Of course the policemen were anxious, as far as they possibly could, not to hurt or injure him. At last they got him out into Palace Yard. His clothes were torn, his face was flushed, his limbs were trembling; but it must be owned that he bore himself with imperturbable good-humour, and talked politely and civilly with the police officials when the struggle was over. The whole scene, however, was utterly unworthy of any House of Parliament. Nothing of the kind, so far as we

know, had ever been seen in the legislative assembly of the smallest South American Republic. Nothing of the kind had ever been known in the Capitol at Washington in the stormy days just before the American Civil War. We shall not attempt to inquire who was to blame—at least, who was especially to blame. Probably everybody was to blame. There must certainly have been some possible way of settling an important constitutional question without dances on the floor of the House of Commons, and scuffles in the lobby and on the staircase leading down to Palace Yard. Moreover, the whole of the scufflings came to nothing, so far as the efforts of those were concerned who wished to prevent Mr. Bradlaugh at any risk from sitting in the House of Commons. He had to be allowed to sit there in the end. A new Parliament came to be elected, and a new Speaker was chosen to the office. When Mr. Bradlaugh once more presented himself to take the oath at the table of the House, the new Speaker, Mr. Arthur Peel, declared that neither the Speaker nor anyone else had a right to prevent a member from taking the oath which he was willing to take. Not long after the whole controversy was put to rest by the passing of an Act which allowed any member to affirm, if he preferred affirmation to the oath.

Mr. Bradlaugh was for several years an active and useful member of the House of Commons. We are anticipating time in order to bring the whole story, or the whole episode, to a close. He concerned himself very much in practical questions, and

made himself a master of the rules and business of the House. He took frequent part in debate, but he never spoke at too great length. He got the ear of the House very soon, and he kept it, because he made it quite plain that he only meant to speak when he had something to say, and that when he had said what he wanted to say he would instantly sit down. These are peculiarities which have an immense charm for a House frequently outwearied and outworn by the talk of men who only speak because they wish to hear their own voices, and because the impulse of talk is on them. Mr. Bradlaugh won upon the House by his genial manners, by his perfect good-temper, and by his willingness to meet his worst political opponent on the friendliest terms. He became positively a sort of favourite with the old Tories in the House towards the close of his political career. Many of these men were chivalrous enough to feel disposed to make advances towards the man against whom they had battled so hard, and who had battled so hard against them. Bradlaugh soon found that, when mere prejudice and passion are away, there is no finer type of gentleman than the genuine Tory of the old school. He took part in several debates on merely political questions, and he always held his own. He seemed to find a positive enjoyment in his Parliamentary occupations. There was a certain amount of vanity in him which was absolutely inoffensive, and was, indeed, almost child-like—a vanity which he made no attempt to conceal, which delighted with a frank delight in the applause

of the House of Commons. He worked very hard on committees, and on some important commissions which he had himself mainly helped to create. Altogether he was bidding fair to be one of the most popular men in the House of Commons.

But Mr. Bradlaugh's Parliamentary career was destined to be short. He had worked even his tremendous physical strength too much. He had never spared himself, and he had to encounter during all his Parliamentary years that terrible struggle against poverty which has borne down so many a man who strove to make a living while striving also to attend night and day to his Parliamentary duties.

In order that he and his family might live Bradlaugh had to undertake incessant lecturing engagements, and to write incessant articles, while he was doing his very best to attend every important debate in the House and to take part in every important division. He devoted himself with characteristic energy to every attempt made, in and out of Parliament, for the benefit of the native populations of India. At last his strength completely broke down. He had put a motion on the order paper of the House for the erasing from the Journals of the old resolutions which had been passed to exclude him. He was not able to propose the motion himself, but his friend Dr. Hunter brought it forward on his behalf, and after some demur the leaders of the Opposition consented to accept it in substance. The motion was therefore carried *nemine*

contradicente, as Mr. Gladstone took care to mention with emphasis, and not only was the whole struggle over, but even the records which justified the House in the exclusion of Mr. Bradlaugh were erased from its Journals.

Mr. Bradlaugh died before he had time to read of his final victory. On the morning of January 30, 1891, he was dead, having lived little more than fifty-seven years. He had undoubtedly lived, like the hero of the Scottish ballad, 'a life of sturt and strife.' His views on the subject of religion were unquestionably odious to the vast majority of his countrymen, and, indeed, to the vast majority of civilised men all over the world. Often, too, he was injudicious, and sometimes even coarse, in his mere manner of giving expression to his opinions. His mind was of a rugged order, and he carried an atmosphere of passion and turmoil about him. In the end, however, the public in general came to appreciate the sincerity and the manhood of his character. Everyone admitted that he was sincere and self-sacrificing, that there was nothing sordid in his nature, and that those were mistaken who at one time regarded him as the mere bravo of a religious controversy. He was borne to earth, if we may quote the words of Macaulay concerning a greater Englishman, 'in peace after so much strife, in honour after so much obloquy.'

CHAPTER III.

INHERITED RESPONSIBILITIES—AND OTHERS.

We have spoken already of the burden of responsibility for foreign disturbance entailed upon the Government by its predecessor. Sir Theophilus Shepstone had accepted the easiest evidence of a popular desire on the position of the Boers of the Transvaal Republic to become a portion of the British Empire. The Boers, or at least the vast majority of them, were a fierce, proud, lonely sort of people, who loved above all other things their independence and their curious self-made nationality. They were nearly all of Dutch descent, and many of them were even of Dutch birth. But they did not regard themselves as Dutchmen. They regarded themselves as Boers, and as independent Republicans of the Transvaal. They did not trouble themselves about their Dutch origin. They were proud of it, in a certain way, when they recalled it to mind, as a Virginian or a Massachusetts man might have been proud, when he thought about the matter, of his English progenitors, but remained all the time a Virginian or a Massachusetts man above everything else. The Boers had, in fact, made up a kind of language of their

own, one great beauty of which, according to their ideas, was that it contained a very limited vocabulary and gave little chance for roundabout, evasive discourse, or for pompous phraseology. They did not even like to mass together amongst themselves. The Boer's idea was to live at a good distance from even his best friend, and to live to himself and his family as much as possible. Looking back on the events now, it seems hard indeed to understand how Sir Theophilus Shepstone, or Sir Bartle Frere, or Sir Garnet Wolseley, as he then was, could possibly have believed that the majority of the Boers were willing to become part of the English dominion.

Yet it is certain that these distinguished men did allow such a belief to take firm hold of their minds. This was at the time when Lord Carnarvon, then Secretary for the Colonies, had set his heart upon a scheme of South African federation under English rule. It all seemed to Lord Carnarvon so easy, so symmetrical, and so natural to piece such a federation together, that he could not believe in the possibility of the Boers being so unreasonable and so cross-grained as to put themselves in the way of such an arrangement. Sir Bartle Frere advised the Boers, 'as a friend,' not to believe one word of anybody who said that the English people would ever consent to give up the Transvaal. Sir Garnet Wolseley declared that 'the Transvaal shall be, and shall continue to be for ever, an integral portion of her Majesty's dominions in South Africa.' 'So long as the sun shines,' he proclaimed on another occasion, 'the

Transvaal will remain British territory.' The sun kept on shining, and seems likely to shine for a good long time yet, but the Transvaal soon ceased to be British territory. Sir Garnet Wolseley himself had to admit very soon after, in a despatch to the Colonial Office, that there was very serious discontent in the Transvaal, that the main body of the Dutch population were opposed to English rule, and that it seemed to be the determination of the Boers to appeal to arms for their independence.

The Boers sent several deputations to England to appeal against the annexation, and they appealed in vain. Yet they found not a few sympathisers in England. Among these was no less a person than Mr. Gladstone himself. Mr. Gladstone denounced in public the policy which had led to the annexation of the Transvaal, and had endeavoured to transform a free European, Christian, Republican community into subjects of a monarchy against the will of more than three-fourths of the entire people. The Transvaal, Mr. Gladstone said in a speech on November 25, 1879, 'is a country where we have chosen, most unwisely, I am tempted to say insanely, to place ourselves in the strange predicament of the free subjects of a monarchy going to coerce the free subjects of a republic, and to compel them to accept a citizenship which they decline and refuse.' A month or so later on he asks: 'Is it not wonderful to those who are freemen, and whose fathers had been freemen, and who hope that their children will be freemen, and consider that freedom is an essential condi-

tion of civil life, and that without it you can have nothing great and nothing noble in political society, that we are led by an Administration, and led, I admit, by Parliament, to find ourselves in this position—that we are to march upon another body of freemen, and against their will to subject them to despotic government?' In a memorable sentence Mr. Gladstone described the Boers of the Transvaal as 'a people vigorous, obstinate, and tenacious in character, even as we are ourselves.' It was often charged afterwards against Mr. Gladstone that he had by these very speeches, spoken on the verge of a great crisis in English political affairs, given the strongest encouragement to the Boers to rise in arms against us, as they soon afterwards did. There cannot be the slightest doubt that Mr. Gladstone's words inspired the Boers with new courage and new hope. A great statesman's speeches, even at that time, reached all parts of the world almost in a breath. But Mr. Gladstone was bound to express his condemnation of a false and futile policy, and the Boers would undoubtedly have risen in arms against us if he had never opened his lips upon the subject. That spirit, at all events, they inherited from their Dutch progenitors. They might be extirpated, but they could not be held in subjection.

The Boers very soon proved the genuineness of their resolve. Some trivial dispute with the British authority precipitated the uprising which was certain to have come soon or late. The Boers took up arms against us. The Transvaal was once again

proclaimed a Republic, and it established a triumvirate Government, and the triumvirate announced their intention to defend their Republic with arms. The first of the triumvirate who signed his name to the proclamation was one of whom we have heard a great deal in these latter days, Stephen John Paul Kruger — 'Oom Paul,' or 'Uncle Paul,' as he was affectionately called by his people. The result is too well known to need any long description. The Boers triumphed completely over our military commanders and our soldiers. If we were to do anything at all, we had to invade the regions of the Transvaal where the Boers were strong, and there the Boers were masters of the situation. Our men fought gallantly, our officers never lost their heads. Sir George Colley, the commander-in-chief, was killed by a rifle-ball while he was giving his orders as composedly as if he had been at one of the autumn manœuvres at home in England.

But the Boers knew their mountains and their passes. They were all splendid marksmen. They went on the principle of taking aim at the English officers first of all, and they had lodged themselves well behind rocks and above ravines. An English naval officer said at a later day, that if you want to dislodge a Boer with a rifle from behind a rock you must spend at least the lives of six English soldiers in the attempt. We had not the English soldiers to spare and on the spot, and, to cut the story short, the campaign was over, the English were defeated, and the Transvaal was independent again.

What was the next step to be taken? A tremendous outcry was raised at home. This was worse, it was cried aloud, than even the defeat by Cetewayo, because you never know where to have those savages, and nobody sets any account on their military glory. But here is a people of Dutch extraction, who claim to have a regular Republic and a regular Administration, and to rank in their way among civilised populations, and they, when declared a part of the British Empire, not only will not have the favour conferred on them, but rise in arms against it, and defeat the English troops, and actually shoot down on the battle-field the English commanding officer.

Now it was quite certain to every mind that Mr. Gladstone intended to recognise the domestic independence of the Transvaal Republic and to make peace. Before the final day of Majuba Hill, where Sir George Colley was killed, Sir Evelyn Wood had been sent out with reinforcements; but he had been sent out unquestionably for the purpose of accepting a proposal of armistice, if it should be made, during which there could be founded a substantial agreement for peace in the future. It is much to be regretted that, when once such a determination had been adopted by the English Government, it was not proclaimed on the instant. Even Mr. Gladstone said something to the effect that it was very difficult to grant terms of peace while the inhabitants of the Transvaal were still in arms against the sovereign power of England. If at the moment of his coming to office he had announced that he would no longer

be responsible for a policy of coercion applied to the Boers, he would have been acting in accordance with his speeches during the winter, and, what must have seemed to him of all men much more important still, he might have saved some gallant lives. However, we must make much allowance for the action of a statesman striving to do his best between the policy of his predecessors and the purpose and the responsibility of his own Government.

The peace was made in the end, but the negotiations and arrangements dragged out for a long time. We are anticipating dates somewhat recklessly in order to bring this one particular chapter of history to a close. Lord Derby had by this time accepted office under Mr. Gladstone as Colonial Secretary, and he was not so impassioned as Lord Carnarvon had been about the creation of a federated South Africa under the sceptre of England. Indeed, Lord Derby was not a man likely to become impassioned about any idea or any enterprise. He was a clear-headed, practical, unenthusiastic person. He had filled many administrative offices, and, unlike most English statesmen of that day, at all events, he had seen a great deal of the world. He had received the delegates from the Transvaal with courtesy, and even with encouragement. On February 27, 1884, a new Convention for the Transvaal was signed at the Colonial Office by Sir Hercules Robinson (now Lord Rosmead), representing the Queen, and by the delegates of what was to be known in future as the South African Republic. The Convention really gave

the South African Republic all that it could reasonably have asked for. It gave to the Boers what was in substance complete domestic independence. Certain restrictions, of course, were made: the restrictions which English statesmen of all times would necessarily make when consenting to the existence of a new State in South Africa. These conditions forbade the introduction of slavery into the Transvaal Republic, insisted upon liberty of religious worship being allowed to all the residents in the Transvaal, and secured for the native populations the right to buy and possess land, and to have access to the courts of justice. The British Government, very reasonably, as it seems to us, reserved to itself a right of veto over the actual conclusion of any treaties that the South African Republic might enter into with any foreign Power. This last condition was absolutely necessary as a guarantee against the possibilities of most serious trouble. Even already a rush of Belgians, Germans, Italians, and Portuguese was being made upon all the hitherto unoccupied portions of manageable Africa. No statesman in the British Foreign or Colonial Office could tell when some trouble might not arise if the Transvaal Republic were allowed to enter into a treaty with any great continental State in total disregard of the interests of England, which had given her back her independence. Had the Boers refused to accept that article of agreement, the strength of those who clamoured in England for a reconquest of the Transvaal might have made itself irresistible. The Boer Government, however, showed

then, as in later times, cool, hard-headed, and sensible, and accepted the terms offered by Mr. Gladstone's Government. The Transvaal passed away for ever, we may hope, from the government of England, and became, except for the few conditions already mentioned, a free and independent Republic. We shall hear of the Transvaal Republic again before this History closes.

All this might seem perfectly satisfactory; but it was not regarded as quite satisfactory here at home. The usual outcry was raised about the humiliation of England under the guidance of the Liberal Government.

A considerable portion of Englishmen, among whom were found Liberals just as well as Tories, cried out that the disgrace of Majuba Hill ought to have been effaced in blood before England consented to let the Transvaal go. Now there cannot be the slightest doubt that, if England had wished to wipe out with blood the humiliation of Majuba Hill, she could have done so at comparatively small cost to herself, and without any dread whatever of intervention on the part of any powerful neighbours. The Government had already sent out Sir Frederick Roberts to take charge of military affairs for a time in South Africa. The Government could have sent him troops enough to reduce the Transvaal Republic not only to subjection, but to annihilation. England could have sent men and weapons enough to slaughter every man, woman and child in the Transvaal, and to float her banner triumph-

antly over a territory which contained only English officials. Mr. Gladstone believed that England was strong enough to act with justice and have no fear. He saw no disgrace to England in a refusal to crush a feeble enemy because the feeble enemy had done what everybody else with a grain of spirit would have done under the conditions. It simply came to this: we were wrong all through. We were wrong when we allowed Sir Theophilus Shepstone to convince us by his hasty and superficial arguments that the Boers were eager to be under our dominion. We ought to have known well enough, long before Sir Theophilus Shepstone went out, that the Boer was a man who had no inclination for any kind of rule but the rule of his own people. If we did not know this, then certainly we ought to have known it. We ought to have known, too, that the Boer, like his Dutch ancestor, would fight against any odds to maintain his national independence. However, as we did not appear to have known all this, and as we certainly did not appear to have acted on any such knowledge, it did not seem to Mr. Gladstone's mind that we were bound to slaughter a certain number of Boers because we had not taken care enough to find out what they really wanted, and what they really did not want. Therefore Mr. Gladstone made peace, and allowed the Republic to work its way within the reasonable limitations which we have already described. All the same, it was made a trouble to him that he allowed the Boers to carry their point

by war. Again and again he was attacked by Tory orators in the Lords and in the Commons, on the ground that he had permitted the meteor flag of England to be trailed in the sand of the Transvaal. Right and morality were all on Mr. Gladstone's side. But none the less it was inconvenient for a minister to have to come into power and to announce that he meant to reverse the policy of his predecessors, even to the extent of giving freedom to men who had fought against the troops of England. Of course, to talk of the men of the Transvaal as rebels was the grossest absurdity. They had never, as a people, accepted our dominion. Only some few persons had told Sir Theophilus Shepstone that, out of regard for present perils threatening the Republic, they might be glad of England's protection. No pains whatever were taken to find out whether that was or was not the opinion of the vast majority of Boers. We decreed their annexation, and they refused to stand it, and they rose against our pretensions, and they defeated our troops, and there was an end. So, at least, Mr. Gladstone thought. We might have gone back and slaughtered them all, but that would not make our wrongdoing a right. So Mr. Gladstone wisely resolved to accept the lesson of events and to let the Transvaal go. But it cannot be doubted that the first effect of the announcement of his policy was to give courage to all his political enemies and to dishearten some of his friends. The impression, far too general in England, seemed to be, that even if Great Britain makes

a mistake in policy, and is willing and anxious to repair it, she has no right to offer any reparation until she has slaughtered enough of those who opposed her to make it evident that she has not yielded to their pleadings out of any feelings of national fear. It may be freely admitted that the policy of Mr. Gladstone in refusing to consent to a needless massacre of the Transvaal Boers did tend somewhat for the moment to diminish his popularity in Great Britain. The revenge that we were told he ought to have taken would in any case have been nothing different from the old-time slaughter of a number of enemies around the grave of some popular hero. The right or wrong of the questions at issue between Great Britain and the Transvaal would not have been brought in any way nearer to a settlement by a massacre to the *manes* of Sir George Colley. Still, the time is far distant when an English Prime Minister can venture to say: 'We were wrong' in this or that dispute, 'and as we were wrong, our duty is to own our mistake and let matters be frankly settled accordingly.' In private life, of course, it always would be so amongst civilised nations of the modern days; but for some persons who profess to be proud of their country, their highest idea of that country's glory appears to be that it shall trample its own path over any inferior nation that comes in its way, or rather in whose way it chooses to come, and that its national pride is only to be satisfied when the victim at his last gasp cries out for mercy. Such an idea, we are glad to know, was never

Mr. Gladstone's idea, and he proved it in his dealings with the Transvaal Republic.

In speaking of South African affairs it may be appropriate and interesting to notice the visit of England's old enemy, King Cetewayo, to London. The visit was made in the summer of 1882, and Cetewayo was for a time a sort of lion with London sight-seers. He was provided with an æsthetic house in the Kensington quarter, and received many curious visitors every day while public interest in him lasted, which was not very long. He was a man of the most unquestionable courage and daring in the battlefield, but he used to tremble at first while going up and down the stairs of his London house. Despite his corpulency he was by no means an unkingly personage to look at. It was not always easy for the interpreter, a son of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, to explain to him who his visitors were. A late governor of Hong Kong went to pay him a visit, and Cetewayo was told that the visitor came from China. The King made not a bad shot; he said he had heard of China—that it was somewhere near India. The lady in one of Disraeli's early novels who is travelling in an English mail-coach hears a soldier talking to somebody about Thibet. 'Thibet?—that's in India?' she interposes inquiringly. 'In a manner, madam—in a manner,' the polite soldier says, unable quite to confirm, yet unwilling to contradict. Cetewayo's definition of China was good enough for his visitors. The King soon returned to his own country, got into a war with another chief

there, and was defeated; put himself under English authority again, and died not long after.

We have described somewhat fully in the fourth volume of this History the growth and the development of the new troubles in Afghanistan which came to be part of Mr. Gladstone's unwelcome inheritance. The Afghan troubles were all a distinct creation of Lord Beaconsfield's Oriental policy, which Lord Lytton was aptly selected to carry out. The English troops occupied Cabul after the abdication of the Ameer, Yakoub Khan, whom England had signed a treaty to maintain against any foreign enemy with money, arms, and men, and had agreed to pay an allowance of 60,000*l.* a year. In return, Yakoub Khan consented to allow a British envoy to reside in Cabul. Out of that arrangement came the Cabul massacres, which we have already described. The British troops fought their way again into that city of disaster. Yakoub Khan abdicated, and gave himself up as a prisoner, and was sent packing to India. Cabul was secure for the time; but the important consideration was what the English Government intended to do with it, and whom they proposed to put into it as ruler. One of Yakoub's generals, a furious fanatic, and at the same time a very clever schemer, rose up against the British, and many of the fierce hill tribes supported the revolt. The English troops had withdrawn as winter came near into the Sherpur cantonments. An army of more than ten thousand men, led by the fanatic and schemer whom we have mentioned, swooped upon Cabul, occupied

it, and went to work to besiege Sherpur. Not much impression, however, was made upon Sherpur. The British troops in the cantonments held out so obstinately against their assailants that time was given for reinforcements to arrive, and before the end of the year Cabul was once more open to the British. A new candidate for the Afghan crown came forward on the introduction of Russia—Abdurrahman Khan, the grandson of the famous Dost Mahomed. Abdurrahman had long been conspiring unsuccessfully against Shere Ali, his brother, and lately had been living at Samarcand, and was doing his very best to induce the Russians to support his claim, which they did in the end. There were other claimants for the crown as well; but it is an old story now, and we need not go into it minutely. It is, however, well to remark that whatever may have been the rivalries of the different candidates, they all seemed to have had one common purpose of hatred and hostility to England. 'I claim to be ruler,' said one, and 'I claim to be ruler,' said the second and the third and the fourth. But, whatever lengths each was prepared to go to against the other, they all appear to have made up their minds that the first step towards agreement or arbitrament, whether in peace or after war, was the extirpation of the British. Abdurrahman seemed to English statesmen on the spot to have the best claim, or, at all events, the best chance of success, and the Indian Government entered into negotiations with him through Mr. Lepel Griffin (now Sir Lepel Griffin),

who was brought to Cabul for the purpose. In the meantime England was again unfortunate. English arms suffered a calamity near Candahar as terrible as any that had been put upon them in all England's dealings with Afghanistan.

Candahar was under the command of General Primrose, an officer of undoubted courage and skill, not yet past his prime, who had had much experience in dealing with Asiatic races and populations. Candahar was not a place to be held easily against any strong attacking force. Yet the authorities in India decided that some small portion of even that small force should be sent out from Candahar to stay the advance of Ayoob Khan, one of the rival candidates, and encounter him in the field. It was a curious blunder in every way. There was not a force in Candahar strong enough to resist any formidable enemy. Ayoob Khan, a very formidable enemy, was known to be on the march to Candahar. It is very doubtful whether the whole force in Candahar could have held the place against Ayoob Khan. It ought to have been quite certain that a greatly diminished force could not possibly have upheld Candahar. It ought to have been quite certain, too, that a force of some two thousand men, detached and sent out to meet the enemy, could not humanly have succeeded in stopping his march. The blunder was double-edged. The Indian authorities had neither strength for the one purpose nor for the other. It turned out that the strength of Ayoob Khan's army had been greatly under-estimated. The

result was what might well have been foreseen. The English soldiers fought desperately, and with splendid skill; but many of the Sepoys had little or no experience in war, and some of them, it was said, had never fired a ball-cartridge up to the day of that battle. There was a complete defeat. The retreat, or flight, or whatever it might be called, only exhibited the horrors of the flight to Jellalabad all over again. Ayoob Khan now laid siege to Candahar. General Primrose was shut up there with his small force and whatever was left of the fugitives from the battle with Ayoob Khan. Yet just then, as so often happens in the story of England's struggles in India, the darkest hour proved to be that just before the dawn.

The military authorities at Cabul determined on one daring stroke, on which everything that concerned our arms in Afghanistan must depend. General Sir Frederick Roberts (as he was then) was sent out with some ten thousand men, British, Ghoorkas, and Sikhs—all that could possibly be spared to him—to raise the siege of Candahar. For three weeks and more nothing whatever was heard of him and his march. There was not much conveyance of authentic news in the vast and trackless region that lay between Cabul and Candahar. That march ought to be one of the famous military movements of history. It had to be done up to time as if it were arranged by clockwork. It had to be done at the uppermost speed, as though the regions it had to traverse were civilised, cultivated, and friendly, and were provided with splendid roads. The British

public held its breath during the long time while that march was on its way. At last Sir Frederick Roberts and his men emerged from darkness, and emerged in time to save Candahar. The place was still holding out when General Roberts came out of the mist, and at once flung himself upon Ayoob Khan and cut his army to pieces. Candahar was saved. Many such chances have occurred in the history of England's dealings with India and the bordering States. Again and again the moment has arrived when everything depended on the success of some all but desperate enterprise, and the success has come at the last. This was one of the most striking events of the kind that Englishmen in India can call to memory. The success ought to have had some effect in lightening the load of responsibilities imposed upon the new Government by the Eastern policy of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Lytton. So marvellous a triumph might perhaps have made up for any previous disaster or failure. But Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues could hardly claim the success as theirs, and leave the whole of the disasters and failures to their predecessors. Things had turned out better than might have been expected, and that was all. In the meantime, Abdurrahman had been received as Sovereign of Afghanistan. But the trouble was not over yet. Abdurrahman was a favourite of Russia, and we had the Russian spectre haunting us for many years. The public mind of Europe was kept for a long time—down to the other day, it might almost be said—in perturbation by the

imagined presence of that Russian spectre. There came again and again a crisis when the slightest turn of the wheel of destiny might have compelled England to go to war with Russia, and all on account of the ruler of Afghanistan and his supposed complicity in the hostile designs of Russia upon our Indian Empire.

Among the responsibilities entailed on him by his return to office Mr. Gladstone had to make public apology and atonement for what we may call, to adopt the phrase once famous, a 'magnificent indiscretion.' In one of his Midlothian speeches, delivered on March 17, 1880, Mr. Gladstone made reference to an account given in the London papers of certain observations said to have been made by the Emperor of Austria. Mr. Gladstone apparently assumed that, the story being in the papers, must needs be true, and so he spoke of it as if he were dealing with an official report. 'Did you see,' he asked of his audience, 'that the Emperor of Austria sent for the British ambassador, Sir Henry Elliot, and told Sir Henry Elliot what a pestilent person he considered a certain Mr. Gladstone to be, as a man that did not approve of the foreign policy of Austria; and how anxious he was—so the Emperor of Austria was condescendingly pleased to say, for the guidance of the British people, and of the electors of Midlothian—how anxious he was, gentleman, that you should, all of you, give your votes in the way to maintain the Ministry of Lord Beaconsfield! Well, gentlemen, if you approve of

the foreign policy of Austria, the foreign policy that Austria has usually pursued, I advise you to do that very thing. . . . What has that policy of Austria been? Austria has been the steady, unflinching foe of freedom in every country in Europe. Russia, I am sorry to say, has been the foe of freedom too; but in Russia there is one exception—Russia has been the friend of Slavonic freedom; but Austria has never been the friend of Slavonic freedom. Austria trampled Italy under foot, Austria resisted the unity of Germany, Austria did all she could to prevent the creation of Belgium, Austria never lifted a finger for the regeneration and constitution of Greece. There is not an instance, there is not a spot upon the whole map, where you can lay your finger and say, "There Austria did good."'

It needs no argument to show that such declarations as these, and coming from such a man, were likely to have a most dangerous influence upon the public mind of England. Mr. Gladstone had been Prime Minister before. He was on his way to be Prime Minister again. It was most important that he should not make new troubles for England in continental politics, and that he should not speak words of offence to the Sovereign of one of the great European Powers, with whom England was on terms of peace and goodwill. We must make every allowance for Mr. Gladstone's own feelings towards Austrian policy. Austria had for many years of his life represented the most reactionary and despotic force in the affairs of the European continent. She

was associated in his mind with the suppression of every impulse towards freedom and unity in Germany. She was associated with the arbitrary rule of Lombardy and Venetia. She had called in the aid of Russia to crush the gallant efforts of Hungary for the recovery of her constitutional freedom; and she had not even, as Mr. Gladstone pointed out, the one merit which Russia possessed—the merit of being a friend to the Slavonic race. Still, it would be a highly inconvenient thing indeed for the nations of the world if their leading statesmen were to live in a perpetual Palace of Truth, and to speak out their opinions about each other's ways and each other's conduct and policy with a frankness which recognised no limits but those of positive accuracy. Even if the Emperor of Austria had uttered the words ascribed to him in the newspaper reports, nothing could have been more unwise than for a statesman of Mr. Gladstone's position to make them a subject of public denunciation. But it soon became known that the Emperor of Austria had not said anything of the kind. Sir Henry Elliot at once declared that the Emperor of Austria had never made to him any observations bearing even the slightest resemblance to the words ascribed to him. In the meantime, Mr. Gladstone had made things still worse in another Midlothian speech, in which he said that, 'outside of Austria—making no reproach as to what is inside of it—that, outside of Austria, the name of Austria has, upon all occasions known to me, been the symbol of mis-

government and oppression in other countries; that neither in Germany, nor in Belgium, nor in Greece, nor in Italy—where most of all she was concerned, for she was the virtual mistress of Italy until Italy was made a kingdom—in no one of these is her name known, except in conjunction with the promotion of what you and I believe to be wrong and the repression of what you and I believe to be right.' Furthermore, he went on to declare that he saw 'menacing signs that the Austrian Government of to-day, and especially the Hungarian portion of its subjects . . . . is engaging in schemes for repressing and putting down the liberty of the lately emancipated communities in the Balkan Peninsula, and for setting up her own supremacy over them, whether they like it or not.' Nothing can be more obvious than that, if there were such an intention on the part of Austria, a public denunciation from a great English statesman would not be likely to help towards a satisfactory settlement of arrangements between Austria and England.

Public feeling in Austria was roused to anger and hostility by Mr. Gladstone's outspoken assertions, and when, after the general election, he became Prime Minister once more, he and his colleagues alike felt that it was absolutely necessary that some public expression of regret should be made by him. Mr. Gladstone, as everybody will admit, seldom does things by halves. He at once entered into a correspondence with Count Karolyi, the Austrian ambassador to England, and he finally sent to the Count a letter which was in fact an apology to the Emperor.

'At the moment,' Mr. Gladstone said, 'when I accepted from the Queen the duty of forming an Administration I forthwith resolved that I would not, as a minister, either repeat or even defend in argument polemical language in regard to more than one foreign Power which I had used individually when in a position of greater freedom and less responsibility.' Then, having disclaimed any hostile feelings towards Austria, and professing, no doubt quite sincerely, his good wishes for her in the work of consolidating her empire, he went on to say: 'With respect to my animadversion on the foreign policy of Austria at times when it was active beyond the borders, I will not conceal from your Excellency that grave apprehensions had been excited in my mind lest Austria should play a part in the Balkan Peninsula hostile to the freedom of the emancipated populations, and to the reasonable and warranted hopes of the subjects of the Sultan. These apprehensions were founded, it is true, upon secondary evidence, but it was not the evidence of hostile witnesses, and it was the best at my command.' Mr. Gladstone acknowledged with satisfaction the assurance of Count Karolyi that Austria had no intention of endeavouring to extend the rights given to her under the Treaty of Berlin. 'Had I been,' says Mr. Gladstone, 'in possession of such an assurance as I have now been able to receive, I never would have uttered any one of the words which your Excellency justly describes as of a painful and wounding character. Whether it was my misfortune or my

fault that I was not so supplied I will not now attempt to determine, but will at once express my serious concern that I should, in default of it, have been led to refer to transactions of an earlier period, or to use terms of censure which I can now wholly banish from my mind.' The letter closed with the words: 'I think that the explanation I now tender should be made not less public than the speech which has supplied the occasion for it; and as to the form of such publicity, I desire to accede to whatever may be your Excellency's wish.'

The Emperor of Austria is said to have exclaimed, when the letter of Mr. Gladstone was shown to him, that it was the letter of an English gentleman. Certainly no apology could have been more complete and unreserved. But it did not satisfy Mr. Gladstone's political enemies in England. Lord George Hamilton denounced the apology as 'shameful and shameless.' In the House of Commons, Tory after Tory accused Mr. Gladstone of having humiliated his country as well as himself. Lord Salisbury, while agreeing with Lord George Hamilton's description of the apology, could only express his amazement that Austria could find any contentment in it, seeing that Mr. Gladstone had withdrawn nothing, and 'only promised, in recognition of the assurance given him by Count Karolyi that Austria would not desire to advance beyond where she now stood, that he would not renew the accusation.' Some of Mr. Gladstone's friends, on the other hand, thought he had withdrawn too much.

They asked why Mr. Gladstone could henceforth banish from his mind all censure with regard to Austrian policy in the past merely because Austrian statesmen now assured him that they had no intention of going outside the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin. Everyone now agreed that it would have been better if the past or present policy of Austria had not been denounced in the Midlothian speeches.

But many of Mr. Gladstone's best friends maintained, nevertheless, that the indictment against Austria's policy in the past, however inopportunely made, ought not to have been publicly quashed by Mr. Gladstone himself merely because Austria promised to keep her 'hands off' the emancipated populations of the Balkan Peninsula. The whole affair was felt as a certain humiliation to the Prime Minister and to the country, and it seemed an inauspicious omen for the beginning of the new Administration. All that could be said in Mr. Gladstone's support would be, that if we wanted to have a statesman always and absolutely cautious, retentive, and self-controlled, we might have many excellent Ministers, but we certainly could not have Mr. Gladstone. He was well worth having, people said, despite his occasional magnificent indiscretions.

CHAPTER IV.

THE IRISH QUESTION.

THE Government was threatened by a greater difficulty than any that could have come just then from abroad. This was the Irish difficulty, which was pressed to the front the very moment that the first scenes of the Bradlaugh episode allowed the House of Commons to get on with its regular work. It was not until May 29 that the Queen's Speech was read in the House of Lords by the Lord Chancellor. The speech had not very much in substance to deal with. Her Majesty had opened Parliament and had given a speech to be read little more than three months before. The speech read on May 29 announced the intention of the Government to abandon what was called the Peace Preservation Act in Ireland, and to bring in measures on the subjects of ground game, the liability of employers to workmen for injuries suffered in their service, for the extension of the Irish borough franchise, and for a settlement of the long-vexed Burials question, which had been brought forward in the House of Commons session after session for many years by Mr. Osborne Morgan, who was now a member of the new Ad-

ministration. All this looked quiet enough. The Duke of Marlborough, on behalf of the Tory Opposition in the House of Lords, expressed his great regret at the decision of the Government to abandon the Peace Preservation Act in Ireland, and to govern the island under the ordinary law. That, of course, was what the Duke of Marlborough would naturally do. Lord Granville replied on behalf of the Government, and the business was settled for that day, at all events.

When the address had been moved in the House of Commons, an amendment was proposed on the part of the Irish Nationalist members, complaining that no allusion to the Irish Land question had been made in the Queen's Speech, and bringing forward an addition to the address which should declare that the subject demanded the immediate and most serious attention of the Government. Mr. Gladstone replied in a conciliatory tone and temper. He declared that the subject would of necessity receive the promptest and most serious attention from the Government, but he appealed to the Irish members themselves to say whether it was not unreasonable to expect that an Administration only a few days in existence should already have so mastered all the details of so complicated a subject as to make an authoritative announcement upon it. To this it was replied by more than one Irish Nationalist member, that the Irish people did not expect an instantaneous settlement of such a question, or even an instantaneous approach to it, but that they had expected

two or three lines in the Queen's Speech, couched in sympathetic terms, to let them know that the new Government was interested in the Irish Land question, and was preparing for a settlement of it. Mr. Forster, Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, made the obvious official reply, that it was the custom not to mention in the Speech from the Throne any measure which it was not intended to bring forward in that same session. Some suggestions were made by Irish members, to the effect that as nothing comprehensive could possibly be expected from the Government in that session, there might at least be an interim measure introduced to stay the eviction of tenants from their holdings until the Government could make up its mind as to some thorough and complete legislation. In other words, the Irish trouble was to the front again, although it came in the beginning with quiet steps and with a deprecation of any hostile purpose.

The trouble was this, to begin with. Mr. Gladstone had himself already acknowledged that the Irish land-tenure system had thoroughly broken down. He made that acknowledgment the foundation for the Act of 1870, which his Government introduced, and which was a good measure so far as it went, but was wholly inadequate to deal with the complicated system of Irish land tenure. It was only a compromise, and was only meant to be a compromise. Mr. Gladstone thought at the time that he was doing the best he could, considering the extreme difficulty there was to pass any measure for the

relief of the Irish tenant through the House of Lords, or even through the House of Commons. But we are satisfied that Mr. Gladstone did not at the time believe that he had settled the Irish Land question. The whole scope, purpose, and effect of the bill has been described in an earlier volume, and it is only necessary to say now that the bill which was passed into law in 1870 was the fitting foundation for a final settlement, inasmuch as it rejected the long-enforced principle that the landlord's right in dealing with his tenants was absolute and unlimited, and it recognised a certain partnership or property of the tenant in the land which he tilled and had made to bear fruit. The point of the former controversy was found in the question whether a landlord was entitled to raise the tenant's rent because of every improvement which the tenant, by his own labour and by his own means, and wholly unassisted by the landlord, had made in the farm. To this question Mr. Gladstone's Act of 1870 gave an explicit answer. The landlord has no such right. If the tenant takes the land on what Mr. Bright expressively termed 'prairie value,' and by his own labour and his own resources converts it into prosperous and fertile soil, the landlord has no right to evict him without at least giving him a reasonable compensation for the improvement he has made. That was the principle established by the Land Act of 1870, and in so far it was a beneficent measure, perfectly safe against any reactionary process.

But then, the provisions of the Act fell far short

of accomplishing all that Mr. Gladstone undoubtedly wished to do. It was an experiment in a right direction, and nothing more. The evictions of hard-working and honest tenants were still going on all over Ireland, merely because the tenant demurred to paying a higher rent, inflicted on him as the penalty of his own industry and energy. The machinery of the Act was utterly inadequate for its complicated purposes, and the measure, although not exactly a failure, inasmuch as it had set up a rightful principle, left the Irish Land question still an open sore and a grievance that always cried out for redress.

This was the beginning of the trouble the Liberal Government had to encounter. There had been in the winter of 1879 and the early months of 1880 a great failure of the crops in Ireland, and a very widespread and keen distress. Failure of crops meant a difficulty in the paying of the rents, and a difficulty in the payment of rent, especially where an increased rent was demanded, meant eviction, and eviction meant such miseries and horrors as civilisation in modern days had rarely seen. The coming of Mr. Gladstone to power had been hailed with hope, and even with enthusiasm, by the great majority of the Irish people. They remembered with gratefulness how he had disestablished and disendowed that Irish State Church which had been a grievance and an insult for centuries. They founded much hope also on the spirit he had shown when pressing through the House of Commons and

the House of Lords his Land Act of 1870. It has already been mentioned that the appointment of Mr. Forster as Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant had been cordially welcomed in Ireland. Perhaps, therefore, the Irish people expected too much from the Liberal Administration—expected more than it would have been then in the power of any English Administration to do. The Irish Nationalist party put forward a prompt practical contribution towards a temporary arrangement. They brought in a bill to legalise compensation for disturbance; in other words, to enact that if, pending complete legislation, an Irish landlord should evict a tenant, the landlord should be bound to allow him compensation for any improvement in the value of the land which the tenant might have accomplished by his own labour and his own money. Mr. Gladstone thoroughly accepted the principle of the bill, and finally consented to the introduction by the Government of a Compensation for Disturbance Bill of its own. The bill was strongly opposed by the Conservatives and fiercely debated. Many of the Irish members objected to it as insufficient, and some of them abstained from voting when it was finally carried on July 26. It was then sent to the House of Lords, and rejected after a debate of two nights, and by an overwhelming majority. Therefore the Irish members found themselves towards the end of the session exactly in the same position as that which they had occupied before the whole question came up, and, indeed, the session

began. The land-tenure question in Ireland was once again relegated back to chaos.

But now, in the meantime, a great change had taken place in the condition of the Irish National party. It had become a strength with which every Ministry would have to reckon. Its numbers were still comparatively small. There were, in fact, three distinct Irish parties in the House of Commons when Mr. Gladstone's Government of 1880 began its work. There were the Irish Tory landlords, who sat for certain constituencies in the North of Ireland, and compared with whom an ordinary old-fashioned English Tory would have seemed like a man of enlightenment and of progress. Then there were the Irish members whom Mr. Gladstone later on described by a happy, perhaps partly unconsciously happy, phrase as 'the nominal Home Rulers.' These men were what might be called the Whigs of Irish politics. They were for the most part highly respectable men—landlords, bankers, merchants, barristers, and others, elected on a very high and restricted suffrage, and having but little real interest in the Irish national movement. Mr. Isaac Butt was able to keep these men together well enough while he was leader of the party. During his time, however, no very serious trouble took place. Mr. Butt made an annual motion in the House of Commons for a committee to inquire into the reasonableness of the Home Rule demand. There was what is called in Parliament 'a full-dress debate,' lasting over two or three nights, and then, of course, the Home Rule

members were hopelessly outvoted, and the subject went to sleep again for the rest of that session. During Mr. Butt's time also the Irish Land question had not got thoroughly mixed up with the Irish demand for Home Rule. The Irish Land question suggested a reform which every Home Rule member was bound to demand, just as he was bound to demand an extension of the Parliamentary and the municipal franchise in Ireland. But by the time Mr. Gladstone came into power the Irish Land League had been formed, and had become a living part of every Irish Parliamentary movement. Other changes also had occurred. The Irish party had got a new leader. After the death of Mr. Butt, Mr. William Shaw had been elected to the leadership of the party. Mr. Shaw was an excellent type of the Irish Whig Home Ruler who has been already described. He was a very able and thoroughly sincere man, a man of the utmost integrity, a man of distinguished position in his own part of his country, and he had undoubtedly got the ear of the House of Commons, by whom he was greatly respected. But he was not a man to lead the Irish party in the struggles which were now coming up. After the general election of 1880 the extreme section of the Irish Nationalists came to the House of Commons with a great addition to their numbers. In fact, a new movement had been started in Ireland by Mr. Parnell, and the whole system of Irish Parliamentary agitation was destined to undergo a change. The Irish Nationalist party met in Dublin immediately after the elections. Mr.

Shaw was again proposed as leader, but after a long debate and a division he was put aside, and Mr. Parnell was elected in his stead.

Now there cannot be the slightest doubt that Mr. Parnell was by far the most powerful Parliamentary figure that had risen in Irish history since the death of Daniel O'Connell. More than that, he soon made himself one of the most conspicuous figures in European politics, and this in the days of Gladstone and Bismarck. We are not comparing him for intellectual greatness with the two illustrious statesmen we have named; but it must be remembered that he had to fight on a much narrower field, and with the poorest resources to sustain him. Parnell, the most resolute Irish Nationalist of his day, was not Irish on either side of his house. On his father's side he came of an old English family who had moved at a comparatively recent period from Congleton, in Cheshire, and had set up their home in the county Wicklow. One of the family was Thomas Parnell, the poet, whose name figures so often in the letters and in the verse of Swift, and whom Pope describes as 'with softest manners, gentlest arts adorned, blest in each science, blest in every strain.' The praises of Parnell the poet by most of his great contemporaries would fall rather flat on the ears of the present generation, by whom, indeed, his name would be almost altogether forgotten had not the political career of Charles Stewart Parnell revived a faint, reflected interest in the author of 'The Hermit.' Sir John Parnell, Mr. Parnell's great-grandfather, was

for many years Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Irish Parliament, and resigned his office because he would not and could not vote for the Act of Union. Sir Henry Parnell, Mr. Parnell's grand-uncle, held high office in the English Ministry, and was raised to the peerage as Lord Congleton in 1841. His end was a tragedy: his brain was overwrought; he lost his reason, and died by his own hand. Mr. Parnell's mother was an American, a daughter of Admiral Charles Stewart, a famous American naval officer, who fought against the English in the war of 1814, and who was affectionately termed by his sailors and his friends, 'Old Ironsides.' So far as we know there was not a drop of Irish blood in Charles Parnell's veins, although his whole public career absorbed itself into the Irish question. During all his earliest years he had had no interest whatever in politics of any kind. He was sent to various private schools in England, and afterwards went to Magdalene College, Cambridge. Here it was, so far as we can learn, his curious fate to make no impression whatever on his teachers or his comrades. He did not distinguish himself in any way, and although he had at all times a great love for science, especially for applied science, he did not make his mark in any branch of study. While he was at Cambridge the Fenian movement broke out in Ireland. His mother was then in his ancestral house at Avondale, in the county of Wicklow. She was supposed to have some sympathy with the movement, and to have sheltered Fenians in the house. Avondale was searched by the police, and even Mrs.

Parnell's bedroom was not allowed to be sacred from the investigation. When young Parnell heard of this indignity offered to his mother, he became suddenly filled with a passion of hatred for English government in Ireland. That was the first time that he ever thought anything about an Irish national movement, and from that moment forth he became the inveterate enemy of English rule in Ireland.

Parnell never went in for any scheme for separation, or for armed rebellion. His mind was thoroughly and above all things practical, and his dream for Ireland was of a National Parliament in Dublin, while the connection with England on terms of willing partnership was to be maintained. He was entirely opposed to any attempt at rebellion by physical force, because he held, first, that there was no chance for a physical-force struggle; and next, that there was no necessity for any attempt of the kind. He firmly believed that an Irish National party in the House of Commons, acting together, could succeed in obtaining from the English Parliament the great measure which he desired to carry. It is only the barest justice to the memory of the man whose character and purposes were afterwards so cruelly misrepresented and maligned, to say that he had absolutely no sympathy whatever with any form of criminal outrage, and that during all his years of political power he exerted every influence he had, and to a great extent with success, to maintain the national agitation within the limits of constitutional order. He was not privately what would be called

an intellectual man. He had read no books except works on applied science, Parliamentary Blue books, and 'Hansard.' The whole literary and artistic side of existence was a blank to him. But it was impossible for a reading man, for even a scholar, to talk to him without being soon impressed by the curious originality, freshness, and strength of his ideas. We have already described the opening of his Parliamentary career. He came into the House of Commons absolutely unknown to the vast majority of its members. Much was against him. He was a poor and untrained speaker. At no time did he ever show any gift of oratory, except so much of eloquence as consists in the art of saying all one wants to say in the fewest and strongest words. Mr. Gladstone said of him, at a somewhat later period of Parnell's career, that he had never heard any man, not excepting even Lord Palmerston, who had so completely the art of saying every word he wanted to say, and not a word more. Parnell's voice was strong and penetrating, but there was no music in it. His style was one which might have been thought the least likely to inspire an Irish audience with enthusiasm. The oratory of O'Connell must have swept any Celtic audience along with it, as, indeed, it swept many and many a British audience along with it. But Parnell was always cold, calm, self-restrained, with hardly a gleam of passion, unless in moments of rare excitement, without a spark of imagination or a touch of poetic feeling. Yet he was able to hold his Irish audiences, his great open-air meetings, hanging upon

his words, and before long he was able to maintain the fixed attention of the House of Commons to every sentence he uttered. His appearance was much in his favour, and suited exactly with the position he occupied. He was tall, stately, with a clear-cut, handsome, pallid, statuesque face. Strangers coming into the House of Commons, not knowing who he was, were attracted by that pale, marble-like face, and asked, Who is that?

Parnell did not begin the policy of obstruction. The policy of obstruction had always been a more or less recognised weapon in the House of Commons. There was an organised obstruction to Lord John Russell's Reform Bill in 1831 and 1832. Mr. Gladstone obstructed the passing of the Divorce Act to the very best of his power. Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Leonard Courtney, and Mr. Chamberlain kept, with Mr. Parnell's assistance, the House of Commons at work for more than one all-night sitting. But there was a very distinct difference between Mr. Parnell's policy and that of other men. Obstruction in other cases had to do with some particular measure, which its opponents were determined not to allow to pass into law if they could by any constitutional process forbid it to go further; or, with regard to certain questions, it was an obstruction which said to the Government of the day: 'You shall not have this measure at all unless you allow into it certain amendments which we propose to make.' But Mr. Parnell's obstruction had a different and a wider object. It is not likely that he saw in the first

instance the full use that might be made of the instrument he was employing. But the idea soon dawned upon him and overspread his strong mind. He was not a lover of England; he was not in feeling much of a democrat. But he was thoroughly convinced that if the attention of the English people, and more especially of the English democracy, could be really aroused to the Irish national claim, the conscience of the majority of Englishmen would be compelled to recognise its justice, and the cause of Home Rule would be gained. Now that and nothing else was the meaning of Mr. Parnell's policy of obstruction—the policy which he carried on, for example, after Mr. Gladstone had come into office in 1880, and when Parnell was made leader of the Irish party. Many people set him down merely as a man who, out of some sort of sinister purpose or malignity, wished to interfere with and harass, obstruct, and irritate every English Government and the whole House of Commons. Mr. Parnell had no feeling of the kind. His was a deliberate purpose, and it was even by the process of exasperation that he tried to fix the attention of the House and the country on the fact that there was an Irish national demand, which it would be necessary to listen to and to take into consideration. Parnell's creed was that the House of Commons was the one great public platform of the country. From that platform he was determined to appeal to and arouse the English people. Therefore he said in substance to the House of Commons: 'If you will not listen to our Irish

national claim, then we will not allow you to discuss any other question whatever of which we can prevent the discussion.' He acted on the inspiration of the woman in the Eastern story—of which woman he had probably never heard—who, having tried in vain to get a petition delivered to the Sultan, took her place with her little children in the public street, and waited until the Sultan rode that way, and then flung herself and her babes in front of his horse's hoofs, and declared that she would not move from that spot until he had listened to her appeal or had trampled her and hers to death. That was the real meaning of the later policy of obstruction. It had its effect. It did attract the attention of the outer public, and of the House of Commons too, to the fact that there was an Irish national grievance and an Irish national demand, and at last people began to ask each other, doubtfully, 'What if, after all, there should be something in these claims that Parnell is making? What if the Irish people have been badly treated about their National Parliament? May it not be that some of the great newspapers, whom we trusted implicitly, have not been guiding us quite rightly all this time?' Of course, when questions of this kind raise themselves in the public mind, then, in a country like England, a demand that has justice behind it is sure to be recognised sooner or later. It is only a question of a little sooner or a little later.

Mr. Parnell meanwhile was becoming a recognised power in the House of Commons.

Sir Stafford Northcote, while he was still leader of the Government in that House, objected once to Mr. Parnell's tone, as that of one who thought he ought to be dealt with by the Ministry on the conditions of equal powers. Truly Mr. Parnell was even then a man with whom a wise Government might have been well pleased to treat on such conditions. No man had anything like the same influence over all the Irish race at home and abroad. He was strongly disliked by most of the advocates of physical force, and thoroughly detested by what we may call the 'outrage men'; but the great majority of the Fenians, who, of course, were not outrage men, but only men who believed in the possibility of winning Ireland's freedom in the battlefield, were satisfied that Parnell and his policy ought to have a chance, and they were quite determined that they at least would hold their hand, and not interfere with the success of the Home Rule party in Parliament. The vast majority of the Irish at home, in Great Britain, in America, and in Australasia, who had nothing to do with Fenianism, were strong in their support of Parnell. It would not have taken much trouble at that time for an English Government to come to an understanding with Mr. Parnell, and such an understanding might have saved us from many a calamity and prevented many a crime. For it is certain now, to all who understood the whole question then or later, that the gradual success of the constitutional Home Rule movement would have meant the gradual, and, some time or other, the final, pacification of Ireland and

the reconciliation of the English and the Irish peoples. In the meantime, however, things had not advanced quite so far as all that, and Mr. Parnell was still regarded by most English statesmen as a mere mischief-maker and a firebrand. It is right to say that there were at least three prominent public men in England who even then did not share that opinion. Sir Charles Dilke was one; Mr. Chamberlain, however he may have been led more lately to change his opinions, was certainly another; Mr. John Morley was the third. These men regarded Mr. Parnell as a patriot, as a statesman, and as one with whom English statesmen ought to try to come to an understanding. But this view was not shared by many on either side of the House of Commons, and even Mr. Bright did not thoroughly understand the nature and the purpose of Mr. Parnell's movement. In truth, it is not easy for men always to see the possibility of good purpose in any movement which keeps them up night after night, sitting and wrangling in the wearisome House of Commons. An English member for a Western constituency embodied the common idea very simply and naturally when he said, in Mr. Parnell's presence, that Mr. Parnell's return to Parliament had been a curse to the House of Commons. Yes—there it was. He was a curse to the House of Commons. He kept men sitting up all night. He did not care about the sanctity of the dinner-hour. He never wanted to dine out. He never went into society. He disturbed or disregarded social arrangements with a pitiless indifference. He had his one sole

business in life, and he stuck to it; and if it disturbed the social conveniences, or even the sleeping-hours, of the great majority of members, he really did not seem to care.

From the point of view of the ordinary member of Parliament, who obtains a seat mainly with a hope of certain social possibilities, what could a man like Mr. Parnell be but a curse to the House of Commons?

It is not necessary to go through the whole story of the Irish trouble session by session. It is a distinct story all to itself, and had best be told as an unbroken narrative. The rejection by the House of Lords of the Compensation for Disturbance Bill created consternation among the Irish tenantry. In proportion to the greatness of their hopes was the depth of their fall into despair. The Government was strongly urged by the Irish members, and by some of the English democratic members, to send up another bill for the same general purpose to the House of Lords in that same session. It is quite possible that if a firmer tone had been adopted by the Government with regard to the House of Lords the Peers might have given way. But though Mr. Forster, on behalf of the Government, had acknowledged that there was a great increase of evictions, and a partial failure of the crops in Ireland, and that the prospect for the winter was very gloomy, yet he did not seem to think that there was anything which could be done by the Government at the time. There were stormy and prolonged debates, and suspensions of Irish Nationalist members, and many all-night sittings,

and a bitter hostility began between Mr. Forster and the Irish members.

One of the new Home Rule Nationalists in the House was Mr. John Dillon, whose name afterwards became of great importance in every Irish movement. He was the son of Mr. John Blake Dillon, already mentioned in this History as a high-minded and patriotic Irishman, who took part in a rebellion, about the success of which he had no hope, rather than abandon his leader, Mr. Smith O'Brien, to his fate. The elder Dillon was at a much later period, and while he was a member of the House of Commons, a foremost mover in the attempt to bring about an alliance between the English Radicals and the Irish Nationalists, to which Mr. Bright lent his most cordial co-operation. The younger Dillon, quite a young man indeed when he entered Parliament, had all his father's devotion to the national cause, and his father's intellect, education and culture. Outside Parliament, the most prominent and influential Irishman was the inspiring force of the Land League, Michael Davitt. Mr. Davitt was born of the peasant class, and got his first impression of the Irish land-tenure system by the eviction of his family and himself, in his childhood, from their roadside cabin. The family sought shelter in England, and Mr. Davitt was sent in his boyhood to work in a factory. By an accident among the machinery he lost his right arm, and thus heavily handicapped had to set out in the struggle for life. He was filled with a passionate zeal for the national cause, and for

the redress of the wrongs which he believed to oppress the Irishman. He took part in the Fenian movement of 1867. He was arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced to penal servitude for fifteen years. After he had served about eight years of the time, for the most part in Dartmoor convict prison, he was released on ticket-of-leave, and in 1879 he, in conjunction with Mr. Parnell, founded the Land League organisation. Mr. Davitt's strong faith in the justice of the Irish cause, both as regarded Home Rule and land tenure, was a passion, and was often expressed in the language of passion. Yet somehow he succeeded in impressing everybody with a conviction of his personal sincerity, and of his absolute freedom from any unworthy purpose whatever. It is not too much to say that during the most tumultuous days of the Irish agitation in Ireland, and in the House of Commons, Mr. Davitt won for himself the personal respect of every Englishman who came near him. It was well known that ambition, or the desire for personal advancement, or for individual success, or for gain of any kind, counted for nothing with him. Mr. Davitt, then, had become a great force outside the House of Commons just at a time when Mr. Parnell was beginning to be a great force inside it, and the two forces were now thoroughly combined.

The winter, as had been expected, turned out to be one of widespread disturbance in Ireland. General Gordon, the Gordon of Khartoum, went over to Ireland to see things with his own eyes, and form an opinion for himself. A letter of his, written to a

friend, was published in the *Times* on December 3, 1880. 'I have lately,' he said, 'been over the South-west of Ireland, in the hope of discovering how some settlement could be made of the Irish question, which, like a fretting cancer, eats away our vitals as a nation.' He deplored the complete lack of sympathy between the landlord and the tenant class, and he declared, 'No half-measured Acts, which left the landlord with any say to the tenantry of these portions of Ireland, will be of any use. They would be rendered, as past Land Acts in Ireland have been, quite abortive; for the landlords will insert clauses to do away with their force. Any half-measures will only place the Government face to face with the people of Ireland as the champions of the landlord class.' Gordon's idea was that the Government should, at a cost of eighty millions, convert the greater part of the South-west of Ireland into Crown land, wherein landlords should have no power of control. 'For the rest of Ireland I would pass an Act allowing free sale of leases, fair rents, and a Government valuation. In conclusion, I must say, from all accounts and my own observations, that the state of our fellow-countrymen in the parts I have named is worse than that of any people in the world, let alone Europe. I believe that these people are made as we are; that they are patient beyond belief, loyal, but at the same time broken-spirited and desperate, living on the verge of starvation in places where we would not keep our cattle. Our comic prints do an infinity of harm by their

caricatures. Firstly, the caricatures are not true, for the crime in Ireland is not greater than that in England; and secondly, they exasperate the people on both sides of the Channel, and they do no good. It is ill to laugh and scoff at a question which affects our existence.' General Gordon's letter made a deep impression on all men with thinking minds. Of course, on the average man of the world it made no impression at all. An Irish member proposed in the House of Commons that the Government should be invited to place the management of Ireland for a time in the hands of General Gordon. The suggestion was made seriously and in all good faith; but we need hardly say that it was not taken seriously by the Government, or, for that matter, by the House of Commons. Yet there is no saying how profoundly the whole condition of things in Ireland and in England might have been altered for the better if it had been possible then to put the conduct of Irish affairs into the strong and sympathetic hands of General Gordon.

As it was, things only went on from bad to worse. Undoubtedly there was much disturbance in Ireland, and there were many outrages of various kinds—mutilations of cattle and murders of men. The tenants formed a sort of trade union of their own, by which they refused to deal with or work for any man who had taken land from which its former occupier had been evicted. The agitation created a new word for the English language. Captain Boycott was an Englishman, and an agent of a great Irish

landlord in Connemara. Nobody in the neighbourhood would work for him; he could get no domestic servants; he and his wife had to do all their household work and their field work for themselves, and he had for a long time to be under police protection. The verb to 'boycott' came in with him, and, to use an old familiar way of putting things, it will probably last as long as the English language itself.

It is only right to say that Mr. Parnell and Mr. Davitt, while they did not discourage mere boycotting, which Mr. Davitt considered an unavoidable incident in the great strike of tenants against landlords, both did their very utmost to warn the peasantry against deeds of actual violence. The Government, however, believed that the Land League was guilty of encouraging and inciting to outrage. The customary steps were taken, as in all such Irish movements, and with the customary result. A State prosecution was instituted against Mr. Parnell, Mr. Biggar, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Dillon, and all the executive body of the Land League. The prosecution of course came to nothing. It would have been impossible to find any jury then in Leinster, Munster, or Connaught who, if not packed by the Crown officials, would have convicted Mr. Parnell of sedition. So the jury in these cases did not agree, and the accused men had to be discharged. The officials at the Castle had not really measured the nature of the struggle that was going on. To the mind of the Irish tenant it had become simply a question of life or death. It

would have been better for Ireland, and for England also, if at the time the Tory Government had been in office, although the Tory Government had done everything that the Liberal Government was doing. Irishmen would have suffered and groaned, indeed, but they would have said to themselves that there was nothing else to be expected from the Tories. Now, however, there came in surprise, shock, disappointment and despair. Irishmen believed that a Liberal Government would have been their friend, and now, behold! the Liberal Government was showing itself, so Irishmen thought, their bitter enemy. What hope, they asked, is left for us now, when even the men whom we believed in as our only friends in England seem to have turned against us? Then there set in a recrudescence of all the old forms of secret society and conspiracy in Ireland. So long as the Parliamentary agitation seemed to be succeeding, and so long as Mr. Gladstone and the Liberals were friends of Ireland, there was little chance for the masked assassin. But when constitutional agitation began for a time to seem barren and hopeless, then the blunderbuss came to its work again. A dreary and even a ghastly period succeeded. Mr. Forster became as unpopular in Ireland as any English Chief Secretary could possibly have been. He was sometimes actually accused, and in good faith, by his accusers of taking a delight in the sufferings of the Irish evicted tenant. Of course this was outrageously and grotesquely unjust and absurd, and it is only mentioned here as a sign of

the times and an illustration of the distorting passion of hatred which had grown up amongst many men in Ireland towards some of the Liberal statesmen. Those who knew Mr. Forster, knew well that he was a humane, single-minded, and Christian man. But the truth is that he was not what most people believed him to be—a strong man. His whole appearance, his huge frame, his massive head, his energetic movements, all seemed to proclaim the strong man. But he was not strong in the best meaning of the word; certainly he was not strong enough for the difficulties by which he found himself surrounded. He had enough of personal courage. Where it came to be a question of meeting danger he never took heed of the risk. But, to put it in familiar language, he lost his head when he found himself confronted with the terrible troubles of the Chief Secretary's office in Ireland. He became completely and, if I may use the expression, sentimentally disappointed with the Irish people. He believed that they had failed to appreciate him, that they had not given him enough of their confidence, that they had shown themselves distrustful of him and impatient with him, and so he allowed his heart to turn against them. They were to him the ungrateful people, who would make no allowance for the difficulties with which he was beset, and who turned against him because he could not give them all they asked for at once. Mr. Forster apparently idealised the Irish people, and regarded it as one ungrateful man.

Let us, however, make some allowance for the Irish tenant, who firmly believed that when the author of the Land Act of 1870 came back to power the wrongs of the Irish tenantry would be redressed, and who now found himself, under the rule of a Liberal Government, turned out of house and home by his landlord, turned out of the farm that his own energy had converted from prairie value to prosperity, with his wife and his little children crouching beside him on the wintry roadside, and with no prospect but the pitiful prospect of workhouse shelter. Now, let it be also observed that, unless every Government, Liberal or Tory, which came into office since that time was utterly wrong and unscrupulous, the demand of the Irish tenant during Mr. Forster's period of office was absolutely justified. Every Government, as we have said, Tory as well as Liberal, that has come into office since Mr. Forster's day has made some endeavour to amend the Irish land-tenure system in the interests of the tenant. We cannot, therefore, be surprised if the Irish people in the south and west and midlands felt that they had been grievously ill-used by Mr. Forster's policy. Mr. Forster now seemed to go in resolutely for a sort of stand-up fight against the Irish people. He carried measures through the House of Commons, not without fierce and prolonged resistance from the Irish members, which enabled him to imprison at will anyone against whom there was 'reasonable suspicion' of an inclination to disturb the country. The men thus imprisoned were not charged with

anything, or to be charged with anything. They were not to be brought to trial at all. They were simply to be locked up, or 'interned' for the safety of the community until quieter times should come round. Mr. Forster put his demands with the greatest candour and clearness. He insisted that a vast deal of harm was done by the 'village tyrant' and the 'dissolute ruffian,' who never brought themselves within the reach of the existing law, but were always urging others on to mischief and to outrage. The present Lord Chief Justice of England, then Mr. Charles Russell, made one of the happiest quotations heard for long in the House of Commons when he asked Mr. Forster whether his village tyrant might not sometimes be 'some village Hampden who, with dauntless breast, the petty tyrant of his fields withstood.' But Mr. Forster was determined to have the power of locking up any village Hampden or village tyrant whom he thought it right to incarcerate, and he carried his measure after long nights of obstruction, of commotion, and disorder in the House of Commons, after the suspension of Irish Nationalist members in batches, and a tumult in Ireland which seemed as though it could never be appeased. Then he went to work with what, no doubt, he sincerely regarded as heroic energy, and he soon had under lock and key a vast number of 'suspects,' as they were called, taken from every town and village and hillside in Ireland. He used to boast that he had every dangerous person in the island under lock and key. Of course Mr. Parnell, Mr. Dillon,

Mr. Sexton, and numbers of other prominent Irishmen were amongst the prisoners. Men of the highest character in Ireland—distinguished physicians, well-known barristers, men against whose personal reputation not a word had been said, men of the landlord class even, who had become adherents of the national cause—came under the net of this extraordinary legislation.

As it afterwards turned out, Mr. Forster only failed in imprisoning the few real criminals whose deeds afterwards appalled and horrified the world. Some of these men, as we all came to know later on, had hatched a regular conspiracy to take his own life, and were watching and waiting for a chance to murder him; and he knew nothing about them or their schemes, while he was cramming the Irish prisons with men whose only offence was that they were pressing too passionately for land reforms which Mr. Forster's own Government acknowledged to be needed.

In the meantime Mr. Gladstone had brought in a new Land Bill for Ireland. It was a distinct improvement on the measure of 1870; but then, ten years and more had gone by, and the new bill, in the opinion of the Irish Nationalists, was not equal to the occasion and the demand. Most of the Irish Nationalist members abstained accordingly from voting on the second reading of the bill. The bill was passed into law; but that it was not adequate to the needs of the country is amply proved by the fact that every succeeding Government, Liberal or Tory, has

expanded and amended it. All this time the Home Rule question was allowed to remain in a sort of abeyance. It was in the mind of everybody, and everybody knew well it would come forward in strength again; but for the season the great struggle about the land was holding the field, and nothing else could occupy public attention. The troubles arising out of the land struggle and the futile measures taken for their suppression held almost the whole attention of the House of Commons. Hardly any other business, except the inevitable work of finance and the services, could be done in the House. We all know now that Mr. Gladstone in his heart never felt any genuine sympathy with the measures of coercion on which Mr. Forster had insisted. But Mr. Forster had declared that without such powers in his hands he could not undertake to govern Ireland, and he, as Chief Secretary, was understood to know all about the condition of the country. Mr. Gladstone therefore showed confidence in his colleague, and allowed himself too much to be guided by Mr. Forster's representations. The whole situation was quickly tending to become, as it did at last become, impossible. There were English Radical members of the Government who had no more sympathy with Mr. Forster's policy than any of the Irish Nationalist members had. Somehow or other an approach was made to Mr. Parnell, then in prison (or it may be that the advance came from Mr. Parnell himself), towards some sort of understanding by which the hopeless struggle against the Irish

people could be brought to a close. Mr. Parnell, it was understood, began to grow alarmed at the reports of the disturbed condition of Ireland which reached him in his prison, and he was very naturally under the impression that if he were free again he could do something to keep agitation within due bounds. However the arrangement may have been suggested, it is certain that a member of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet represented to the Prime Minister that there were conditions under which Mr. Parnell and his Parliamentary colleagues might be released from prison with advantage to the public safety. Out of all this came what is called 'the Kilmainham Treaty,' the full history of which we fancy has not yet been written. Mr. Parnell and other Irish members of Parliament were made free men once more, and Mr. Forster instantly resigned his office. Mr. Forster was for carrying on the stand-up fight against the Irish people to the very last, and he would not remain in Dublin Castle under any other conditions.

Then came the important question about the appointment of his successor. There was a strong desire among the Irish Nationalists in the House of Commons that either Sir Charles Dilke or Mr. Chamberlain should be entrusted with the office of Chief Secretary. For a time the general conviction was that the place would be offered to Mr. Chamberlain. That, indeed, was Mr. Chamberlain's own conviction, and, acting on it, he very reasonably called together a few of the leading Irish members, in the

belief that a frank interchange of ideas might lead to some satisfactory results. The place, however, was not offered to Mr. Chamberlain. As a matter of fact it was offered to Sir Charles Dilke, but with the stipulation that he was not to have a seat in the Cabinet. Sir Charles Dilke refused to accept the office under such conditions, and, as it seems to us, his refusal was amply justified. The Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant is in any case the actual governor of Ireland, and it was out of the question that, at a time of such stress and trouble, Sir Charles Dilke could undertake duties which he was not himself to have an opportunity of defending in the Cabinet. The appointment then was conferred on Lord Frederick Cavendish, a younger brother of Lord Hartington, and one of the most popular men in the House of Commons—especially popular, it may be added, among the Irish Nationalist members, to whom, while he held the office of Junior Lord of the Treasury, he had always shown himself courteous and friendly. Lord Frederick Cavendish was not supposed to be very strong as a statesman; but the explanation of the appointment was popularly believed to be found in the fact that Mr. Gladstone, who had a great friendship for Lord Frederick, and to whom Lord Frederick was absolutely devoted, intended to govern Ireland himself through the medium of the new Chief Secretary. All hopeful expectations were, however, soon brought to a close. We need not tell over again the ghastly story of the murders in the Phœnix Park, Dublin. The plot of

the assassins was doubtless aimed in the first instance against the life of Mr. Thomas Burke, the Permanent Under-Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, who, it is now known, was getting the threads of a great murder conspiracy within his hands, and whom, therefore, the assassins believed it necessary to remove from the scene. Lord Frederick was in company with Mr. Burke, and met his death while gallantly striving to rescue his friend from the knives of the murderers. The heavens might well have been hung in black that day. The news reached London late on the night of Saturday, May 6, 1882, but it was not made generally known in London until the following day. Perhaps no other piece of news in our time has really made so distinct an impression on the very appearance of the Sunday streets in London. The crimes were at once denounced in a manifesto issued on behalf of the Irish Nationalists which bore the signatures of Mr. Parnell, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. Davitt.

CHAPTER V.

'ON FAME'S ETERNAL BEADROLL.'

THE close of the year 1880 rang down the curtain on the life of one of the greatest English novelists. On December 22, 1880, the woman whose literary name was George Eliot died. We have already expressed in this History our opinion as to the genius, the greatness, the peculiar merits, and the peculiar defects of George Eliot. Criticism would come in but poorly just now, and, at any rate, we have said all that we desire to say in that way. George Eliot was undoubtedly amongst the greatest English novelists. She ranks with Fielding, with Jane Austen, with Dickens, with Thackeray, and with Charlotte Brontë. Of late years there has been a sort of reaction against her influence. From having been absolutely worshipped in her time, she has come now to be the subject of a certain revulsion, and, at all events, of a considerable neglect. This, indeed, would seem to be one of the conditions of literary fame. The younger generation gets tired of those who were the idols of its elders—tired of them simply, perhaps, because the elders sang their praises too much. In literature one has to pay later on the

penalty of popularity. At the present time there is a sort of reaction, not only against George Eliot, but against Dickens and Thackeray, and, in a different field, against Macaulay and Stuart Mill. Charlotte Brontë at the present hour is little read by the outer public, and an American writer has lately said that people in America do not talk much about Nathaniel Hawthorne now. These men and women have, in fact, become classics, and the 'up-to-date' reader, to use a vile slang phrase of the present day, does not much care about classics. The up-to-date reader of any day did not care much about classics. But the fame endured, and, more than that, there is always a new set of readers growing up, as education spreads and deepens among the lowly and the poor, who care nothing in particular about writing merely because it is up to date, and turn back eagerly to the great writers that are out of date. Every year in England there are new editions, cheaper and cheaper editions, put into circulation of Scott, and Dickens, and Thackeray, and George Eliot, and Charlotte Brontë, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. To be a classic means, it would seem, only to be independent of actual date, and to find new readers in each generation. Certainly no woman novelist in England ever rose to a higher level than that attained by George Eliot, and the year becomes one of melancholy note when she passed out of life. Her later writings had not been quite up to the level of her great successes. She was falling into mannerism, as Dickens did, and as Thackeray did. Nothing

could have impaired the fame of the great work she had done, but perhaps it was as well that the world was not allowed to see any more of Daniel Deronda and Theophrastus Such.

During 1880 the 'great Eltchi,' as Mr. Kinglake called him, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, died. He had completed his ninety-second year when his career came to a close, but, of course, his active career had come to a close long before. The whole school of diplomacy to which he belonged had been broken up long before his death. He was one of the principal movers in the ill-fated enterprise of the Crimean War, a war for which no one now has a good word to say, and the policy of which was opposed at the time by some of the greatest and most patriotic men and women then living. It was opposed by Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright, and it was condemned in advance by John Henry Newman in his famous series of lectures on the Turks in Europe. The publication of Sir Theodore Martin's Memoirs of the late Prince Consort made it clear to all the world that the Queen and her husband both felt sad distrust of the policy which led up to that war. There can be little doubt that Lord Stratford de Redcliffe was governed much in his diplomatic course by his personal and political dislikes. He hated the Emperor Nicholas of Russia, and believed he had been offended and injured by him, and therefore he invested Imperial Nicholas with almost demoniac characteristics, and regarded him as the direst enemy of England. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe was an

overbearing man, a despotic man, and, like most other overbearing and despotic men, he could become the mere slave of an idea when once he allowed it to get hold of him. He was, indeed, a patriot in his own way. He loved his country, and he had rendered her some important service. But his memory is associated in the public mind with that of a policy which has wholly passed away, and of an enterprise the fatal results of which are, even at this hour, distracting our statesmen.

Sir Alexander Cockburn died in 1880. His had been a brilliant and most successful career. We have already told of the splendid figure he made in the great debate on the Don Pacifico question in 1850. He was one of the few great advocates who ever made a distinct political figure in the House of Commons. He was a politician as well as a lawyer. From the time of his speech in the Don Pacifico debate his career was upward and upward until he died. We have described already his memorable charge to the grand jury in the historic trials arising out of the disturbances in Jamaica. He was one of the most brilliant talkers of his time, and would have been accounted a brilliant talker at any time or in any society.

A man of a very different order died in the same year—Lord Hampton, who was better known to the public—we shrink from saying better known to fame—as Sir John Pakington. Sir John Pakington had made a respectable career of it in the House of Commons as a Tory of a quiet and unaggressive sort

of school. When a Tory Administration was to come into office he had shown great courage in accepting any position offered to him, no matter how little suited for it he might be by intellect, or tastes, or teaching, or experience. Everyone liked him, and was inclined to accept him, but he never was very prominent in politics, save on one interesting occasion. That was in 1867, when he blurted out the whole story of the 'ten minutes Reform Bill' which Mr. Disraeli had prepared to meet the exigencies of a critical situation. Sir John Pakington expounded it all to the world with an unconscious humour which set the whole British public on a roar.

In the early part of 1881 one of the most conspicuous figures of his time quitted the world on whose literature he had had a wide, and perhaps a lasting, influence. Thomas Carlyle died, at the age of eighty-five, at his home in Cheyne Row, Chelsea, on February 4, 1881. It would be without purpose to attempt any long criticism here of the career and the writings of Thomas Carlyle. Here again, as in the case of George Eliot, we have very nearly said all we want to say. Since Carlyle's death, however, there has come up a controversy about the duty of a biographer, which agitated the English public a good deal, and is not yet by any means forgotten. Mr. Froude was authorised to write the life of his friend and hero, and there can be no question that he told a story which distressed and shocked the vast majority of the reading public. The outer public—those, that is to say, who knew

nothing of Carlyle but from his writings—were fond of regarding him as a great Christian Stoic philosopher. All his teaching enjoined above everything else patience and forbearance, and he wrote page after page and delivered lecture after lecture proclaiming the golden virtue of silence. Some persons, no doubt, fancied all through that Carlyle's glorification of silence was about as unreal as Lord Byron's frequent poetic proclamation of his total indifference to the opinion of the world. But it was only when Mr. Froude's book came out that all the public knew how much of Mr. Carlyle's time was occupied in grumbling at everything, in despising all men and nearly all women, and in magnifying little molehills of annoyance into mountains of calamity. The world, as we have said, was shocked at the time, and for a good long season the effects of the shock remained. After a while, however, people began to recover from this painful impression, and to ask themselves whether, if the full story of every man's daily life and daily troubles and daily maunderings were revealed in print, we should have any real philosophers left for our hero-worship. Among the Stoics, says Emerson, every man was a Stoic, but among the Christians, where is the true Christian? But among the Stoics was every man really a Stoic? May there not have been Stoics who in the seclusion of their daily lives grumbled and groaned just as much as Carlyle ever did? The question of the duty of a biographer in such a case has not yet been settled, and, indeed, has come up again in a new form and

with regard to another celebrated life. Into that question we shall not enter here. It is a comfort, at all events, to think that we have in Carlyle's writings the best that he could give. With that possession bequeathed to us, and always to be ours, it matters little to us whether Carlyle was a real Stoic or only a sham Stoic.

Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, Dean of Westminster, also died in 1881. He was a great teacher in his own way, and a great thinker, and he held a peculiar position among the Church of England ecclesiastics of his time. He was not so much a force as an influence. He cannot be said to have originated any movement, but he helped to keep many movements in order. He was a charming writer, a most delightful talker, a man who exercised great power over his Church and over the social life of his time. His home in Dean's Yard, Westminster, gave a welcome to intellect and culture and social reform from all over the world. He had travelled much, and had made friends everywhere, and it may be said, without exaggeration, that every distinguished man or woman from any country might be met sooner or later under Dean Stanley's roof. The world lost much by losing him, and with his death it may not unfairly be said that one of the social and literary lights of London went out, not to be relumed. Another Churchman of a very different kind died in Ireland about the same time—the once famous Catholic archbishop, John of Tuam, John McHale, whom O'Connell had described as 'the lion of the tribe of Judah.' Arch-

bishop McHale had lived to the age of ninety, and was seven years old when the Rebellion of '98 broke out. He was through all his life a fervid Nationalist, but he was steadily and sincerely opposed to any political movement which carried with it even a threat of violence. His was always a moderating force, although he could never, even for a moment, be numbered amongst the Catholic bishops who used to be called the Castle bishops—that is to say, the prelates who accepted the patronage of the successive Irish Viceroys. Dr. McHale was a great Irish scholar, and worked very hard in the popularising of translations of the Scriptures into the language which in his days was still the only tongue of a large proportion of the Irish people. Among other men more or less famous who died in this year, so sadly rich in deaths, was George Borrow, the author of 'Lavengro' and of 'Romany Rye.' Borrow was a man of something like genius, who went his own way in life, wherever it led him; who, like one of Browning's heroes, was ever a fighter, and who yet passed away in peaceful obscurity, almost forgotten by the public, which he had once puzzled and perturbed. John Hill Burton, the Scottish historian, died in this year, and Edward John Trelawney, who assisted in the burial rites of his friend Shelley; and Grenville Murray, traveller, adventurer, author, known to all men as 'The Roving Englishman' of Crimean War days, and the bitter opponent of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. A word of notice may be given to James Spedding, the critic and biographer, who did so much to commend the writings of Bacon to

the more modern English public; and Mrs. S. C. Hall, who prevailed on that same English public to read some pretty and genial stories of Irish life; and William Rathbone Greg, the 'Cassandra' essayist; and Edward Miall, in his day a distinguished and a powerful leader of the Nonconformist party in and out of the House of Commons; and, in a very different line, Edward A. Sothern, the actor, who literally created the part of 'Lord Dundreary.' Mr. Sothern was a brilliant actor in every part he undertook, but his fame will live in the history of the English stage as that of the man who made the world acquainted with 'Lord Dundreary.'

'Erhabner Geist,' says Goethe's Faust, 'thou gavest me, gavest me all for which I asked.' So might Lord Beaconsfield have fairly said when, in early April 1881, he lay dying in his house in Curzon Street. He had had a severe attack of bronchial asthma, and the east wind was always trying to him. The east wind continued to blow, but for some time the bulletins did not give the public any reason to suppose that Lord Beaconsfield was in serious danger. At last, however, it was made clear enough that the danger was immediate. Crowds of inquirers came to the house in Curzon Street every day; amongst them many who had been thoroughly and consistently opposed to the public policy of Mr. Disraeli, and of Lord Beaconsfield; amongst them many, too, who had been quite out of sympathy with his political career, and who believed that he had been an ambitious and a self-

seeking man first of all. But the thought that so great a career was about to close anticipated that burial of all hostility which death itself brings about. Disraeli might in those sinking days have spoken the words of Faust. Destiny had given him everything for which he could possibly have asked. In the days of his early ambition he had distinctly made it to be understood that he meant to shine, first in the House of Commons, and next in the House of Lords, with a different oratorical style suited to each assembly. At that time there seemed almost as little prospect for him of such successes as there was for one of Napoleon's marshals when he joined the ranks as a private soldier.

Mr. Disraeli, indeed, had the advantage over Faust, because Faust, as he tells us, found that nothing could be perfect in man's destiny, and instanced the grim companionship to which he was chained. But Disraeli had no such trouble in life; had, indeed, so far as the outer world could tell, no trouble in life whatever. The ups and downs of political struggle were in themselves a source of supreme delight to him. He had in his nature all the joy of the strife, and the one next best thing to him, after a political victory brilliantly won, was a political defeat gallantly sustained. After many sessions of utter failure in the House of Commons he suddenly found his chance and was recognised. From that time his career had been one of steady advancement and of growing fame, until he reached the pinnacle of his ambition, the highest point of any English

political man's ambition, and became Prime Minister. He closed his career fittingly, and as he would himself have desired, in the stately seclusion of the House of Lords. He was undoubtedly one of the most interesting and fascinating figures in the European history of his time. He had made a great and quite a unique success in literature. The political novel was never done half so well in England by anybody else. Indeed, it might not unreasonably be said, that his are the only political novels in the English language. He had been for many years the most splendid gladiator in the House of Commons. He was not equal as an orator to Gladstone or to Bright, and, indeed, it may fairly be questioned whether he was, in the highest sense of the word, an orator at all. But he seemed to get more joy out of his fighting powers than anyone else in the House of Commons. He was often poor and thin and monotonous in statement and exposition, and his budget speeches, for example, had nothing in them of the charm and the witchery with which Gladstone could delight the House in opening a financial debate. But when Disraeli came to reply, and especially when he came to reply in what he must have felt to be a losing battle, then all his splendid resources of sarcasm, of ridicule, and of invective came up spontaneously to his help, and carried the whole House away in unstinted admiration of his fighting power. He cannot be regarded as a great statesman, as statesmanship ought to be considered. He was rather what Carlyle might have called a 'Swiss

of Heaven,' and fought for many a cause with which neither his brain nor his heart had any particular sympathy. He had a boundless ambition, and he followed his own star. Men of thorough sincerity, and who had nothing but public purpose to inspire them—men like Gladstone and Cobden and Bright—felt shocked now and then by what seemed to them his lack of earnestness. Not many years before Lord Beaconsfield's death, Bright had spoken of Disraeli's 'sated ambition.' Bright and Disraeli talked one night privately in the House of Commons, and Disraeli suddenly said, 'You know what you and I come here for. We come here for fame.' Bright could not succeed in persuading him that he, Bright, at least did not go to the House of Commons for fame. Disraeli smiled blandly, and almost pityingly, and declined discussion. It would not be possible to convince him that any man could waste his days and nights in the House of Commons for the mere sake of serving this or that public movement. But we have to make allowance for the nature and temperament of men, and we may own that it must have been extremely difficult for a man like Cobden or a man like Bright to do full justice to the career of Disraeli. Even Mr. Gladstone, much as he may have condemned Disraeli's showy and fantastic policy, in foreign affairs especially, would have been able out of his own love for the fighting work of the House of Commons to make some allowance for Disraeli's personal delight in Parliamentary battle. But Cobden had absolutely no Parliamentary or political ambition

whatever; and Bright hated the life of the House of Commons, and, notwithstanding all his majestic eloquence, would never have made a speech in or out of Parliament if he had not felt that he had a duty to discharge.

We must not, therefore, judge Lord Beaconsfield too much according to the test of men like Cobden and Bright. Nature appeared to have made him for self advancement, and he fought his way upward and upward, finding the fight hardly less of a joy than the success. With all the temptations that fame and society must have offered to him, he seems to have led personally a blameless life. His bitterest enemy never suggested that any question of pecuniary gain ever occupied his mind. He was a good friend to his friend. He was especially kind to young men of promise who seemed to have an ambition like that of his own early days. He was quite willing to use the thoughts and ideas of other men, sometimes even without taking trouble to put them into words of his own. Some phrases are always ascribed to him, although, in fact, he only borrowed them without the use of quotation marks. 'Men of light and leading' belongs to Edmund Burke. 'Extinct volcano' is taken from Byron. In the famous case of his speech on the death of the Duke of Wellington, a reproduction of an oration by Monsieur Thiers over a dead French marshal, there can be no doubt that Mr. Disraeli had copied out the most striking passages of the speech simply for his own gratification, as he often copied striking passages from any author,

and that the words got imprinted on his memory until he came to believe them his own. The same must have been the case when he reproduced in a novel some of the most striking and popular passages from one of Macaulay's most popular essays. Everybody just then was devouring Macaulay, and it is utterly out of the question to suppose that Mr. Disraeli could have had any idea of passing off as his own the words of the best-read essayist of the day.

Lord Beaconsfield in society was capricious of mood. He sometimes sparkled with epigram and paradox, and sometimes fell into a fit of brooding silence. His hosts and hostesses could not count on him. He might delight the dinner-table with his talk, or he might sit mute, with his head bent over his plate. He was not very companionable even with his colleagues on the Treasury Bench, or on the front bench of Opposition. He had his chosen friends, to whom he was always kind and confiding, but his colleagues in general, like his hosts and hostesses, could not always count upon his mood. He had, one might almost say, no friends among the outer public. For all the splendour of his opportunities and his successes he was a lonely, self-sufficing man. He had had all he wanted. Everything came to him in the end. He died about half-past four o'clock on the morning of Tuesday, April 19. No throb of pain seems to have troubled his parting moments. His spirit passed away in quiet, after a life of so much unrest. Those who watched over him said

that a few minutes before his death he raised himself a little in his bed, stretched himself out in a kind of approach to the attitude which he was accustomed to assume when he rose in the House of Commons, and his lips moved without sending out any words. Very likely his dying fancy was giving him back his old place in Parliamentary debate, and he thought he was rising once more to address that House of Commons to which his life had been devoted, and where he had won his fame. If this be so, no end could be more characteristic of the man, no dying fancy could have given him so really back to life, even for that passing instant which closed his dazzling career.

CHAPTER VI.

'OH! WHITHER HAST THOU LED ME, EGYPT?'

'THE Englishman,' says Kinglake, 'straining far over to hold his loved India, will plant a firm foot on the banks of the Nile, and sit in the seats of the Faithful.' The prophecy did not seem very near to fulfilment, even in the later days of the Dual Control. England and France were alike, to all semblance, engulfed in Egypt. Both together did not appear to be able to do much good for the country. Things were going from bad to worse. One Ministry followed another, one Khedive followed another, and there was just the same story of enormous palace expenditure and fearful national misery. The Dual Control in itself was a very costly system, for in many departments of the Civil Service it was found necessary to appoint a French official side by side with every English official. If this sort of thing were not done the national susceptibilities of France were sure to be aroused, and unhappy Egypt had, therefore, a new and original experience of the difficulty of serving two masters. All manner of experiments in the way of popular government had been tried. A Parliament was set up, but it either failed

to work at all, or it worked to spread a sense of grievance in the native mind. There were people sanguine enough to think that some good was secured by the Ottoman Porte conferring on the ruler of Egypt the title of Khedive, and thus securing the direct descent of the rulership from father to son. The creditors of Egypt all over the world were shrieking out to England and to France that something must be done to pay off their claims, or to make the payment secure in the end. One might as well have talked to an Irish landlord or to a Southern planter in the old days about the beauty of economy and the necessity of balancing income and expenditure, as to endeavour to reason with an Egyptian Khedive on the expediency of keeping the national finances in good order.

Then, at last, there happened what anybody who had ever been in Egypt, or, indeed, had any faculty for the observation of human nature in any country, might well have anticipated. Egypt was overflowing with European officials. The inevitable Englishman, with his unwelcome comrade, the equally inevitable Frenchman, could be seen in every bureau and every railway station and every telegraph office. Naturally there sprang up a movement which may be explained or represented by the cry of 'Egypt for the Egyptians!' To be sure, it would not be quite easy to define who were the Egyptians—what particular race had a just claim to the monopoly of the phrase. Still it was perfectly clear who were the foreigners. No one was prepared to contend that

the vast bureaucracy of Englishmen and Frenchmen, with a German thrown in here and there because he had studied more about foreign languages and foreign ways than the Englishman or the Frenchman —nobody could seriously contend that these constituted an Egyptian population. After a while the feeling that Egypt ought to be for the Egyptians took shape in the form of a National party. There was a sudden movement in the army itself, a positive insurrection, although unstained by blood, which was familiarly known as 'the insurrection of the colonels.' This movement gave to the national party, hitherto vague and unformed, a policy, a position, and a leader. The leader was Arabi Bey, afterwards Arabi Pasha, in whom centred the whole hopes of the Egyptian National party. Arabi Pasha appeared to most foreign observers at the time to be a man of great ability, sincerity, and patriotic virtue. The winter of 1881 and 1882 was the time during which his star beamed brightly in Egypt. Cairo was crowded that winter with European visitors, English for the most part. To these the possibility of a great national uprising in the country added a fresh curiosity and a new delight. A clever and humorous Englishwoman wrote once from Cairo to a friend of hers describing Egypt as 'all sandy and sphinxy and tiresome.' Many English tourists, men and women, in the winter of 1881 and 1882 found, no doubt, in their secret hearts that Egypt was a little too sandy and sphinxy and tiresome. But even these brightened up in interest when there seemed a

possibility of a national revolution in the country. With eager curiosity, English tourists watched Arabi Pasha as he rode on his white horse past the verandah of Shepheard's Hotel, and they noticed that the people ran after him as they did not run after the Khedive when he drove through the Shoubra. The Khedive at first seems to have patronised the movement of Arabi Pasha, as he came to be called when the Khedive wished to confer on him a mark of honour. Arabi became War Minister, and as such was really master of the Egyptian Administration. It was believed that the Sultan himself was in his secret heart favourable to Arabi, or at least to the Khedive under Arabi's guidance. England was much puzzled as to the course she ought to pursue. If Arabi really represented a strong national party, it looked somewhat out of keeping with England's traditions and with England's policy that she should interfere to crush him and his devotees.

It does not seem easy to understand what Arabi Pasha proposed to himself at the time. Probably he had made up his mind that England would not venture to interfere, and that, even if she did interfere, her effort would be thwarted by the jealous action of France, and possibly even of other European Powers as well. There can be no doubt that, as regards France, at least, Arabi Pasha had hit on a certain portion of the truth. He was a man of great natural intelligence, but he was singularly ignorant of European affairs, and could not speak any language but Arabic. The few Englishmen whom he occasionally met

were men of a somewhat too quixotic, or at least chivalric, character to be able to represent the views of English diplomatists. These men believed that Arabi was sincerely patriotic, and that he was at the head of a great national movement, with which all Englishmen ought to be in sympathy, and they probably had no difficulty in assuring him that an English Government would never think of crushing such an agitation. In the meanwhile the air seemed to be filled with rumours about some manner of coming crisis; no one could exactly say what he thought it likely to be. The ironclads of England and France were ordered to Alexandria. The English and French diplomatists urged that Arabi and his immediate colleagues in the national movement should be compelled to quit the country. Arabi treated the suggestion with absolute contempt, but he and his ministerial colleagues resigned office. The Khedive Tewfik tried to form a new Ministry, but failed, because the leaders of the army declared against him, and absolutely refused to obey the Dual Control, or to recognise any authority but that of the Sultan. From that time it became clear that a crisis was inevitable. A sudden and by no means unnatural alarm sprang up among the European residents at Cairo and Alexandria. There was talk everywhere of a possible massacre of the foreign populations. We may take it for granted that no scheme of massacre could have entered for a moment into the mind of Arabi Pasha, or would have received any toleration whatever from him. He was un-

doubtedly a man of high moral character; and even if he had not been so, he must have known very well that any such action would prove the direst enemy to his political and personal objects. As the events turned out, it was a supposed attempt at massacre which led to the ruin of Arabi Pasha and his movement.

Weeks and even months of intense anxiety passed on, and the patronage of the Sultan seemed to be almost ostentatiously bestowed on Arabi Pasha. Arabi set to work at the defences of Alexandria, where the Khedive had meantime joined him, and pushed them on with great energy and speed. Suddenly, on June 11, 1882, a disturbance broke out between the natives and the Europeans in Alexandria. No one could tell how it began or why it began; whether it was a deliberate plot on the part of any of the native population, or whether it was merely the chance spark and the exposed powder-cask. However that may be, there was a riot, and several English and French subjects were killed, and the English consul was dragged from his carriage, and severely wounded, and rescued with much difficulty. Still the British Government was reluctant to land troops, although it was clearly made known that an English force would protect the Khedive against Arabi or anyone else. The Porte endeavoured to interpose all manner of delays, and the formation of a new Egyptian Ministry was talked of, in which Arabi was once again to be Minister for War. England up to this time had made it her business to act in every way in concert with France. But France for

various reasons was not inclined to intervene actively in the affairs of Egypt. Meanwhile Arabi had thrust the Khedive aside, and was assuming an attitude of defiance to England, and the works of the fortifications were going on every day.

Suddenly the English authorities determined to act alone. The admiral in command of the English fleet, Sir Beauchamp Seymour, afterwards made Lord Alcester, a brave man and a good sailor, was ordered to prevent the progress of the fortifications at any cost, and he gave notice that unless the forts commanding the harbour were surrendered, in order that they might be disarmed, the British fleet would begin action. On the night of July 10 the English fleet took up its position. It was composed of eight ironclads and five gunboats, with a force of more than three thousand five hundred men, and a hundred and two guns. That same night the French fleet, acting, of course, on orders received from Paris, left the waters of Alexandria, and steamed away for Port Said. There was a practical end of the Dual Control, at all events. The bombardment began at seven in the morning of July 11. The fight did not last long, nor could its issue have been doubtful for a single moment. The Egyptian gunners appear to have handled their guns very well; and the English officers and sailors could see from their own ships that the whole native population of Alexandria was enthusiastic for Arabi, and that even women and children were helping the Egyptian gunners to serve the guns against the British fleet. The bombard-

ment began again the next day, and then the flag of truce was hoisted from the city. The flag of truce, however, was only intended to cover delay, and at last the news was brought to the British admiral that Arabi and his troops had withdrawn from the whole line of fortifications, and that Alexandria was in a condition of the wildest lawlessness and tumult. This was a state of things for which, apparently, the British force had not been prepared. The British admiral had not men enough to occupy the town in strength, to prevent any further disorder after the forts had been silenced and given up. He did, however, the best that he could, and he received a cordial helping hand from the crews of many an English commercial steamer lying within range of Alexandria. Much mischief was done, however—much massacre was effected in Alexandria before Admiral Seymour had landed blue-jackets enough to repress the disorder and outrage. The native population, animated by the very passion of despair, had attacked right and left all foreigners on whom they could lay a hand, and had destroyed several beautiful public buildings, merely for the reason that they were admired by the hated foreigners. During two days fire, plunder and murder raged in unchallenged possession of the historic and beautiful city. It is estimated that more than two thousand Europeans, chiefly Levantines, were put to death in that terrible time. So sudden had been the decision of the Home Government, and so inadequate had been the preparation made, that the English admiral

was not able to act with the promptitude which, under better conditions, his past career gave every reason to expect. There was sharp fighting in the streets of the city when the blue-jackets and Marines came in; but order was restored at last, and then the unfortunate Khedive was brought back from his palace at Ramleh, about four miles from the city, whither he had retired to be out of the way of trouble, and was once more installed in Alexandria under a special guard of English sailors and marines. Alexandria was now completely in our hands, and the Khedive was in our hands as well; but there remained still some fighting to be done, which could have been done very quickly and completely, with success to the English arms, if there had been force enough under Sir Beauchamp Seymour's command to occupy Alexandria in time to cut off the retreat of Arabi Pasha. The success came later, of course, but it was dearly purchased by the inevitable delay. In the meantime we had recaptured Alexandria for the Khedive, who had never asked us to do anything of the kind.

The bombardment of Alexandria led, among other results, to Mr. Bright's resignation of his place in Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet and his final farewell to office. The resignation, indeed, was expected by everyone, and the only surprise was that it had not been announced immediately on the arrival in London of the news of the bombardment. The mind of the Liberal Government had apparently been, at last, quite made up on the very day of the bombardment of the Alexandria forts. Lord Granville wrote to

Lord Dufferin, then the British ambassador at Constantinople, to say that 'The record of events in Egypt during the last few months shows that the whole administrative power has fallen into the hands of certain military chiefs, devoid of experience and knowledge, who, with the support of the soldiers, have set at naught the constituted authorities, and insisted on a compliance with their demands.' 'Such a condition of affairs,' Lord Granville continued, 'cannot fail to be disastrous to the welfare of any civilised country.' 'Therefore,' he said, 'Her Majesty's Government now see no alternative but a recourse to force to put an end to a state of affairs which has become intolerable.' We see, then, that the Government, driven to bay, had at last formally made up its mind that England, even if left alone, must take forcible action, and that the Government was well aware that France would not be likely to assist it in such a policy. All this must, of course, have been known to Mr. Bright, and therefore people wondered why he had not resigned office the very moment it came to his knowledge. It was utterly opposed to the whole principles and policy of his lifetime to consent to England's armed intervention in the affairs of a foreign country, and more especially when the intervention meant the suppression of a movement which claimed to be popular and national. Mr. Bright, however, delayed the making known of his resolution until July 15. The reasons for the delay were set forth clearly enough in the speech which he made to explain his resignation. 'The simple fact,' he said,

'is that I could not agree with my late colleagues in the Government in their policy with regard to the Egyptian question. It has been asked, Why had I not sooner left the Government? Why have I postponed it to this time? I may answer that question by saying that my profound regard for my right honourable friend at the head of the Government, and my regard also for those who now sit with him, have induced me to remain with them until the very last moment, when I found it no longer possible to retain my office in the Cabinet.' This was, indeed, the simple truth, as was well known to all who were in Mr. Bright's confidence. Mr. Bright had had for many years an absolute devotion to Mr. Gladstone. Some of his own intimate friends had complained now and then that he allowed his devotion to one man to carry him too far; and it must have been a terrible wrench to him to break with his old leader. There is something natural and very touching in the feeling which moved Mr. Bright to hold on to the very last moment before putting into action the inevitable resolution to withdraw from Mr. Gladstone's side. 'The fact is,' Mr. Bright went on to say in his explanation, 'that it was a disagreement to a large extent founded on principle, and now I may say, that if I had remained in office it must have been under these circumstances—either that I must have submitted silently to many measures which I myself altogether condemned, or I must have remained in office in constant conflict with my colleagues. Therefore it was better for them and better for me—the House

will, I am sure, unanimously agree to that—that I should have asked my right honourable friend to permit me to retire, and to place my resignation in the hands of the Queen. The House knows—many members, at any rate, who have had an opportunity of observing any of the facts of my political life know—that for forty years at least I have endeavoured to teach my countrymen an opinion and doctrine which I hold—namely, that the moral law is intended not only for individual life, but for the life and practice of States in their dealings with one another. I think that in the present case there has been a manifest violation both of international law and of the moral law, and therefore it is impossible for me to give my support to it. I cannot repudiate what I have preached and taught during the period of a rather long political life. . . . I asked my calm judgment and my conscience what was the part I ought to take. They pointed it out to me, as I think, with an unerring finger, and I am endeavouring to follow it.'

There can be no doubt that Mr. Bright's declaration expressed the opinions and sentiments of a large number of English Radicals. Many of those Radicals, however, were unwilling to break away from their leader on this one question of foreign policy. Even in the Cabinet itself there were men who lamented the course into which the Government had been drawn. Now, at this distance of time, when one can calmly review the progress of drift towards the Egyptian occupation, it seems impossible to discover

any consistent principle on which the English statesmen in office could have acted. At one time they were urged on by Gambetta, and then, again, they were pulled back by Monsieur de Freycinet. At one time they approved of the Assembly of Notables in Egypt, and at another moment they took fright at the influence which Arabi Pasha exerted over the Assembly. They could not make up their minds as to whether Arabi Pasha spoke for a large proportion of the native population, or whether he only represented himself and his own personal ambition. The House of Commons was not taken early enough into the confidence of the Government. All the assurances that the House could obtain were that the Dual Control was to be kept up, and the alliance with France to be an absolute condition. Only in the second week of June, just before the events which led to the bombardment, were any papers on Egyptian affairs laid before the House of Commons, and even these came down no later than February 15 in that year. On January 30, Lord Granville wrote to Lord Lyons, the English ambassador in Paris, that her Majesty's Government desired to maintain the relations of sovereign and vassal between the Sultan and the Khedive, and that they believed the French Government shared in these views. But suppose that Egypt were to be thrown into some condition of disorder which would not allow the quiet working out of this policy, what measures should then be taken? The answer which Lord Granville gave to this suggestive question was certainly not one which

could have prepared an English public for the sort of policy which was afterwards adopted. 'Her Majesty's Government,' Lord Granville said, 'have a strong objection to the occupation by themselves of Egypt. It would create opposition in Egypt and in Turkey; it would excite the suspicion and jealousy of other European Powers, who would, her Majesty's Government have reason to believe, make counter-demonstrations on their own part, which might possibly lead to very serious complications; and it would throw upon them the responsibility of governing a country inhabited by Orientals under very adverse circumstances. They believe that such an occupation would be as distasteful to the French nation as the sole occupation of Egypt by the French would be to this country.' What, then, was to be done? The further explanation of Lord Granville does not throw much light upon the mist. 'The Government,' Lord Granville says, 'have carefully considered the question of a joint occupation by England and France, and they have come to the conclusion that, although some of the objections above stated might be lessened, others would be very seriously aggravated by such a course.' Was anything, then, to be done? The Government strongly objected to an occupation by England alone. But they objected still more strongly to a joint occupation by England and France. Here is what Lord Granville suggests: 'With regard to a Turkish occupation, her Majesty's Government agree that it would be a great evil, but they are not convinced that it would entail political dangers so great

as those attending the other alternatives which have been mentioned before. If a temporary occupation could be arranged, with the full consent and under the control of England and France, and with proper guarantees and conditions, such a mode of using force might be the least objectionable of those which have as yet been proposed.' Now it is, at all events, quite apparent that up to this time, at least, the English Government had no idea of attempting such a policy as that which it afterwards undertook. We do not want to make light of the difficulties which surrounded it. The whole conditions of the crisis were new and strange and changeful, and it may well be that the Government, driven by events, had no alternative but to take the course it adopted in the end. But what we wish to point out for the present is, that the course which the Government preferred in January 1882—that is, a Turkish occupation—was the one which, as time went on, dropped absolutely out of serious consideration.

It seems to us now that, of all courses possible to take, this would have been the very worst. Nor do there appear to have been at that time any very serious difficulties about coming to an agreement with the great European Powers. Prince Bismarck admitted that England and France had acquired a position in Egypt which ought not to be interfered with by any other European State. With regard to intervention, he said that although he was personally favourable to that of the Sultan, as sovereign in Egypt, he would not stand in the way of any other

proposal which might be agreed to and sanctioned by the Great Powers in concert. The Russian Government expressed itself well satisfied with the views which were taken thus far by England and France. Down to May 2 we find Lord Granville repeating his general objections to any armed intervention by anybody in Egyptian affairs, but repeating also his conviction that, if the landing of troops should become absolutely indispensable, it would be better to employ the Sultan's force for the purpose than that of any other European State. It seems, therefore, clear that the English Government had at this time no fixed principle of policy or action; nor is it easy to understand why English ministers allowed themselves to drift away or be dragged away into the course that was so soon after adopted. Within two months the policy which Lord Granville preferred, and the policy which he deemed most objectionable, were alike put out of sight, and the Government found itself face to face with the necessity of a separate armed intervention by England. As to the real strength of the national movement in Egypt it is hard to form any judgment now, but it is certain, at all events, that the Khedive himself believed that there was something in it and behind it, and that he coquetted with it—was willing to entrust himself to it and to accept its nominal leadership. England had still some fighting to do. Sir Garnet Wolseley was sent to command the operations. The safety of the Canal had been made certain. The English troops under Sir Garnet were about 11,000 bayonets, 2,000 sabres, and 60

guns. Arabi entrenched himself at Tel el Kebir. The British advance was so quickly made, and kept so well up to time, that Arabi's forces were taken completely by surprise and by a rush. The Egyptian soldiers fought bravely, but after the first bayonet charge of the English all was practically over. Arabi was made a prisoner, pleaded guilty to the charge of rebellion, and was sentenced to death. The sentence, however, was at once commuted by the Khedive to one of perpetual banishment. It would have been rather strange if the Khedive had quietly allowed his late Minister for War and his comrade at Alexandria to be put to death for an attempt in which there can be little doubt the Khedive at one time wished him every success. Arabi, with some of his fellows in the war, was sent into exile to Ceylon, having given their parole to the English Government that they would not make any attempt to escape from the island. There seemed, indeed, no particular motive for them to make any attempt at escape. As they could not possibly go back to Egypt, it may be presumed that Ceylon was as good as any other part of the world for them.

Sir Garnet Wolseley deserved every credit for the manner in which he conducted the military operations. It was a very little war, it is true, but it might have been dragged out much longer had the command of the English forces been in less skilful and energetic hands than those of Garnet Wolseley. Not an hour was lost in bringing it to a close, and not a life was lost that could under the conditions

have been spared. Nobody in England was inclined to go into pæans of triumph over the event, but everyone said the whole unlucky and pitiful business could not have been managed better by English arms, and everyone felt glad that it was at an end. Since then, of course, the Dual Control has vanished, and England has occupied Egypt on her own account. There can be no doubt that the British occupation has brought great material benefit to the people of the country. Taxation has been reduced and equalised, forced labour has been abolished, and something like justice has been done in the courts of law. If the object of the English Government were merely to ameliorate the condition of the different races in Egypt, it might be said that the occupation of the country had been a philanthropic success. But no English statesman could possibly pretend, or ever did pretend, that British diplomacy had any such purpose when it planted a more or less firm foot on the banks of the Nile. As has been shown, English statesmanship had in the first instance no other purpose than that of securing the Canal and the whole highway to India—securing these against Russia in the first instance, but also against France. Down to the very latest moment, as we have seen, the English Government was altogether opposed to an English occupation of Egypt. Whatever benefit, therefore, may have been brought to Egyptian populations, English policy obtained no credit for it. We have had many troubles arising out of the occupation since the days when Arabi Pasha was quietly packed off to Ceylon. We shall hear of

some of these troubles before long. Even at the time when this volume is likely to appear we shall probably be reckoning with new troubles. The problem is, how to keep what we have already got, and thus far the idea of statesmanship, whether Liberal or Tory, seems to be that of an extension of territory and frontier southwards—to 'advance and advance,' not, as Carlyle says, 'on chaos and the dark,' but on chaos and the sun. Expedition after expedition has been sent out to extend the Egyptian frontier, nominally for the Khedive, but really for the English occupation, and some of the expeditions have been ghastly failures, while others have been at least temporary successes. 'Much will have more,' the old proverb says; but in this case it is not that much really wishes to have more, but that much is compelled for the sake of much's own security to try to have more. Meanwhile, it is quite certain that France is as little reconciled to English dominion in Egypt as she was twenty years ago, or forty years ago, or at any other period. England has got into rulership for the time, and she cannot just at present escape from it. Her occupation of the country is to a great extent the offspring of a traditional policy of distrust and alarm. There will be, and there are, distrust and alarm engendered by the action which England has felt compelled to adopt. Home interests are apt to get forgotten in such rivalries, and it may be that even yet England will be called upon to make sacrifices which are not worth making, as the court lady says in Shake-

speare's 'Henry the Eighth,' 'For all the mud in Egypt.'

One sacrifice to the mud of Egypt was made in the person of Professor Edward Palmer, who as an Oriental scholar and linguist never had a superior. In the summer of 1882 he was sent out by the authorities, either here or in Egypt, on a mission to prevent, if possible, any alliance between Arabi Pasha and the Bedouin tribes of the desert. He was quite willing to go, for he was a brave and a patriotic man, and he did not hold his life at a pin's fee, if he could in any way serve what he believed to be the cause of his country. But he should never have been sent, or allowed to go, on such an errand. His position was one of uttermost danger, for it was something only too like that of a spy in the ranks of the enemy. Palmer, of course, believed himself to be an emissary, but the enemy could hardly be expected to regard him in that light. He and his companions were captured by hostile Arabs, and at once put to death. The English Government afterwards had some of his captors sent to trial, and five of them were convicted and executed. That was but cold comfort to the admirers and the friends of Edward Palmer—to those who mourned over that life of sudden and futile sacrifice. The remains of Palmer and some of his companions were recovered, borne to England, and laid under the dome of St. Paul's. It is some comfort to think in the case of Edward Palmer that, as Mr. Ruskin said of a gifted English artist who died far away from his people, 'the sands of the desert are not allowed to sweep over his forgotten grave.'

CHAPTER VII.

SOME LOSSES TO THE WORLD—ONE GAIN, AT LEAST TO PARLIAMENT.

Some famous men were lost to the world in 1882. On April 9, Dante Gabriel Rossetti died. Rossetti was a poet and painter, and in each capacity had the gift to exercise an immense influence over the taste and the feelings of his age. With Ford Madox Brown, and Millais, and Holman Hunt, and some others, he helped to bring into existence the Pre-Raphaelite movement. We have already given some account of that movement in this History. It was undoubtedly started by men of genius, some of whom, like Millais, gave it up before very long and went their own independent way. It degenerated, in fact, into a school. Let us never again use, says François Coppée, '*ce vilain mot* school.' As Coppée pointed out, speaking of another movement, it came to be a crowd of pupils in a hall or a studio, all trying only to imitate not the art, but the tricks and the mannerisms, of the principal teachers. That, however, was not the fault of men like Dante Rossetti or Madox Brown. Neither of these men thought for a moment of founding a servile school of mannerisms, or of

cramping the freshness or originality of the youngest pupil whom they tried to teach. These men were not responsible for the results; the results came in spite of them. Their effort and hope was to bring art back from the feeble mannerisms of the time to the more wholesome and poetic influences of an older epoch of painting. But, as we have said, the movement settled down to be a school, and nothing could come of it but gradual decay. It was so in poetry as well as in painting. Dante Rossetti, Algernon Swinburne, and William Morris were men of genius, true poets, inspired poets, but their admirers and worshippers could only imitate their peculiarities and reproduce their defects. It was another example of the contortions of the Sibyl without her inspiration.

In the same month of April Charles Robert Darwin died, the greatest naturalist of his epoch, the man who first reduced to symmetry and system and clearness a great scientific idea which had been floating for some time, more or less hazily, in the minds of other men. The publication of Darwin's 'Origin of Species' was, in its way, one of the most important events in our age. It has been discussed by all the world ever since, and it is under discussion still. There are some who insist that it has established itself as a fixed principle in human science, as something that never can be disturbed or discredited, like the law of gravitation or the principles of arithmetic. There are others, no doubt, and perhaps of later years an increasing number, who are not quite

prepared to admit that Darwin has settled everything as regards the growth and development of humanity. But whether he has or has not settled everything, his claim to be the author of the theory is beyond reasonable dispute. It is true, as we have said, that the general idea may have flashed upon other minds—may have flashed, for example, upon the mind of Goethe and the mind of Oken. But Goethe had not opportunities of observation, had not experience enough to work the idea into a theory and a system, even if he had not a good many other occupations more really congenial to his mind. Darwin worked the idea into a theory, into a principle, and into a system, and made it his own. The inventor of the steam engine is not the man who first says to himself that there may be some way of turning steam into a propelling force; the inventor is the man who works out the idea to completion and success, and shows the world how steam can be made to propel. In that true and genuine sense Darwin was the author of the theory which astonished, captivated, or frightened the intellect of the world; which was viewed with alarm and detestation by many, who believed that it was meant to undermine the foundations of the whole Christian faith, and was as absurdly welcomed by many others, on the assumption that it was destined to settle once and for all every question of doubt which could perplex the heart of man. Charles Darwin was buried in Westminster Abbey—a fitting burial-place for a man so great in intellect, so intensely devoted to his own business in life, and so

well qualified to make English science an admiration to the world.

Towards the close of the year English literature had to bear a loss by the death of Mr. Anthony Trollope. Anthony Trollope was one of a distinguished literary family. Indeed, there might be a general biography written of the Trollopes, as there might be of the Coleridges or of the Arnolds. There certainly was no one man or woman among the Trollopes who came near to the rank of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, or of Hartley Coleridge, or of Doctor Arnold, or of Matthew Arnold. Still, the Trollope family had given much light to literature since the days when Mrs. Trollope anticipated Charles Dickens in her caricature descriptions of American social life. Anthony Trollope had followed out, on a narrower scale and with weaker touch, the lines that had been laid down for the English novel of the day by Thackeray. He was Thackeray produced, if we may use that expression, into thinness. He had nothing like Thackeray's variety of character, but within his own very limited canvas he drew with a careful and effective touch. The style of his novels was curiously unlike anything that might have been expected from the man himself. He was a big, burly, self-assertive man in private life, full of jollity and animal spirits, a great rider to hounds, never discouraged by no matter how many tumbles off his horse; and yet the main tone of his novels is that of quiet, delicate, minute, photographic fidelity to the sort of life which he took it on him to describe.

Without any of Thackeray's genius, or fancy, or feeling, or creative power in a larger sense, he yet contrived to carry out Thackeray's literary principle as far as it well might be carried, dwindling downwards. He has put into his novels some figures which are likely to live for a long time. No one could better describe the small domestic troubles of an English family, the restrained grief of some pretty girl who has fallen out with her lover, or the miniature struggles for precedence amongst certain circles in an English cathedral city. Early in the following year England lost Mr. S. R. Green, a historian of great gifts and promise. Mr. Green died all too soon for his work. He was only forty-six when the death summons came. He told the story of England's growth and development as it had not been told before; a narrative severely accurate, in the truest sense philosophical, full of animation and amusement.

Parliament opened on Thursday, February 15, 1883. The Speech from the Throne expressed, as was to be expected, a formal satisfaction at what was called the settlement of the Egyptian struggle. It is very unlikely indeed that any of the ministers who were joined in preparing that speech had the faintest belief that the Egyptian question was really settled. But we must use ceremonial language on a merely ceremonial occasion. Even a member of the Liberal Cabinet might have been excused if a smile passed his lips when those passages from the royal speech were read out announcing that tranquillity had been

restored in Egypt, clemency had been shown by its ruler to the leaders of the rebellion—the ruler being himself at least the titular leader of the rebellion—and that 'the withdrawal of the British troops is proceeding as expeditiously as a prudent consideration of the circumstances will admit.' Some fourteen years have passed since that speech was read to the Houses of Parliament, and the withdrawal of the British troops from Egypt is not proceeding with much expedition, and is not likely, barring possible emergencies, so to proceed. The want of enthusiasm, or even of sympathetic interest, felt by the House of Commons in the policy which led to the bombardment of Alexandria was well illustrated when the Government proposal for grants to Lord Wolseley and Lord Alcester because of their services in the Egyptian campaign was brought up for consideration. Sir Garnet Wolseley, it should be said, had been made Lord Wolseley, and Sir Beauchamp Seymour had been made Lord Alcester, because of the services they had rendered in that campaign. Nobody grudged either man the honour conferred on him, but it was asked fairly enough in a London evening paper, if we granted a peerage for the work done by the leaders in the Egyptian campaign, what we could possibly offer in the way of reward to a future English Moltke, should such a man arise, who had beaten back a powerful and tremendous attack upon England herself. However, no one denied that the work had been well done; only, the contention of some was that it was poor work in any case; and the

contention of others was, that even though the officers ought to be rewarded, the policy which they had carried out in the discharge of their duty ought to be emphatically condemned.

The royal messages on April 16 recommended, in the first instance, that annuities of 2,000*l.* for two lives should be granted to Lord Alcester and Lord Wolseley. On April 19 Mr. Labouchere started an opposition to the grant to Lord Alcester. In all ordinary cases a royal message suggesting a reward for naval and military work unquestionably done well is merely a ceremonial, and is accepted as a matter of course; or when on very rare occasions opposition has been started, it has usually been confined to a very small knot of men who object to war as war, and who would refuse to give to a soldier anything beyond his regulation pay for doing his soldiering work. But there could be no doubt that the opposition in this instance had greater weight than that of a purely platonic objection to war, and that it made a certain impression on the House of Commons. We need not go over the debate, as the nature of the opposition is clearly indicated by what we have already written. The important fact is, that when the division bell rang a large number of Radical members left the House altogether, and even then so considerable a minority as 77 Liberals stood by Mr. Labouchere's amendment against a majority of 209, in which the Conservative leaders and their followers have to be reckoned. The opposition to Lord Wolseley's pension was taken separately, and on somewhat dif-

ferent grounds. It was led by Mr. Broadhurst and Mr. Burt, two of the working men's representatives in the House of Commons. The opposition only obtained 55 votes, against 178 which supported the ministerial proposition. There was felt to be a certain difference between the position of Lord Wolseley and that of Lord Alcester. Lord Alcester's action typified the beginning of that intervention by the Government which so many Englishmen deplored. Lord Wolseley, on the other hand, had only to come in and complete the work which the bombardment of Alexandria had rendered inevitable. Then, again, Lord Alcester had made a speech at the Mansion House in which he certainly seemed to impress on his audience the fact that the last vessel conveying refugees from Egypt was towed out of the harbour of Alexandria at four o'clock on the morning of July 10, and that the attack on the batteries began at seven o'clock the following morning. This statement of Lord Alcester's certainly gave the idea that the bombardment had been started as a punishment for the disturbances of June 11. The Government had never admitted anything of the kind, but, on the contrary, had always insisted that the bombardment was an act of absolute necessity with regard to the policy of the future, and not in any sense whatever an act of vindictiveness for what had been done in the past. Seeing the undoubted discrepancy between the statement of Lord Alcester and the declarations of the Government, many Radicals expressed openly the belief that the Government really knew no more than anybody else at home

about what was going to happen in Egypt, and that they had been blindly led by the blind into a course of action opposed to all the traditions of the Liberal party and to all the most recent professions of the Liberal statesman. There can be no question that this debate in the House of Commons, following so closely on the resignation of Mr. Bright, tended much to weaken the authority of Mr. Gladstone's Government with some of the very men to whom he might most naturally have looked for support. Those of us who now turn back, and quietly survey the whole course of events between this time and that, and who remember how often England has been assured that everything is quiet and safe in Egypt after the latest expedition, and that there will never be need of another expedition, find it hard indeed to understand, not how any Government should have undertaken such a task—for there might possibly be in the minds of English statesmen paramount and supreme reasons for accepting any responsibility and encountering any risk—but how any Government or Governments could season after season have failed to see the seriousness of the task, and have cheerily looked up after each disaster, and said, 'Now all is done, and the future is quite safe,' until the next disaster came.

Meantime things were not going well with the Government in the House of Commons. The Irish question was becoming more and more acute. Almost the whole time of the House was taken up by that irrepressible Irish question. The Tories coquetted a

good deal with the leaders of the Irish party. Mr. Forster, out of sheer dislike for the Irish policy of the Government, seemed more and more inclined to oppose everything which the Government was anxious to do. Mr. Bright also was becoming more and more bitterly opposed to the Irish Home Rule party. In a speech which he delivered at a public dinner he spoke of certain members who were found in alliance with 'an Irish rebel party, the main portion of whose funds for the purposes of agitation came directly from the avowed enemies of England, and whose oath of allegiance is broken by association with its enemies.' This, of course, was in allusion to certain members of the Tory party. 'I hope,' said Mr. Bright, 'that the constituencies will mark some of the men of this party, and that they will not permit Parliament to be dishonoured and government to be enfeebled by members who claim to be, but are not, Conservative and constitutional.' Mr. Bright's change of attitude on the Irish question was undoubtedly remarkable, and is even still hard to explain or to understand. It is perfectly certain that he had denounced the manner of legislating for Ireland and dealing with Irish grievances during the whole of his past public career. It cannot be said with any seriousness that he turned against the Irish party on the ground that Ireland was drifting into rebellion. Most assuredly he never had been an advocate of rebellion under any conditions, and he was on sincere and conscientious principles opposed to violence of any kind. But he had stood up for

the Fenians after they had actually gone into rebellion, and had excused them on the ground of the wrong done to Ireland by imperial legislation. He had spoken up manfully in the House of Commons for mercy to the men convicted of the attack on the police van in Salford, and he had contended that that offence was a political offence, if ever there was one. He had many close friends amongst Irish Nationalists, and he had blamed some of these again and again, with kindly remonstrance, on the ground that they were not strong enough in their advocacy of the national cause. There were stories told in and out of the House of Commons, to the effect that some hasty and bitter words spoken of him by one or two Irish members during some of the debates, when he supported coercion, had turned him altogether against the Irish national cause. It seems hard to believe that so conscientious a man and so unselfish a man could really have been swayed in his public policy by any offensive words spoken of him in sudden heat. Still, it is only fair to say that the story of the deep offence taken by Mr. Bright, and never effaced from his mind, had more to support it than the mere idle gossip of the House of Commons. Sir Stafford Northcote took the earliest opportunity of calling the attention of the House to Mr. Bright's declaration that an alliance had been formed between the Conservatives and the Irish rebels, and he asked the House to declare that this charge, made out of doors, was a breach of privilege. The scene that followed was painful in every way. Mr. Bright

defended himself not very successfully, and admitted that as the word alliance was capable of two interpretations he ought not perhaps to have used it. He only meant to tell his constituents, he said, that there were two parties in the House, each equally striving to embarrass and discredit the Government. But it was obvious that he must have meant something sharper against the Tories than the fact that they happened to be opposing the Government while the Irish members happened to be opposing the Government also. As to the word rebels, he admitted it would not apply to all the Irish members, but only to some who would not resent its application. He mentioned in particular one Irish member, a friend of his, to whom he said the word could not possibly apply. The Irish member thus referred to got up, it must be said, after Mr. Bright had finished his speech, and declined to accept any commendation which distinguished him from his colleagues. All the Irish members, he declared, felt just as he did with regard to rebellious movements—that they could not be successful, and that they were entirely unnecessary, inasmuch as Ireland could trust to time and patience and constitutional agitation to secure her claim for domestic self-government. There was something humiliating about the whole episode, so far as Mr. Bright was concerned. When he had made his speech he was, according to the ways of the House, obliged to withdraw while the discussion went on. Men were not used to seeing Mr. Bright placed, even for a moment, in the position of a sort

of culprit or delinquent in that assembly which he had so often thrilled and elevated by his noble eloquence. The Government supported him in this painful struggle, but only succeeded in defeating Sir Stafford Northcote's motion by 151 votes against 114, which was not much of a triumph either to the Ministers or to Mr. Bright. Mr. Bright never again had any friendly dealings with the Irish Nationalist members.

The air began to be disturbed at this time by rumours of Irish-American plots for the use of dynamite. These rumours were by no means entirely without foundation, for, as a matter of fact, some attempts at dealing destruction by the force of dynamite were undoubtedly made in London and at other places. It was judged necessary to strengthen the existing Explosives Act by provisions making the mere accumulation of explosive material, except for avowed and legitimate objects, a penal offence. The measure was introduced by Sir William Harcourt in the House of Commons, and was passed through all its stages in one night—a rare event in the history of the House. Sir William Harcourt introduced the bill with a certain air of mystery, conveying the idea that the Government knew a great deal more about the matter than they thought it prudent to make public. The House of Commons was not unwilling to admit that there might be good reason for such reserve. Mr. Parnell recommended his followers to offer no opposition to the measure, and so it was carried through in the manner that we

have described. It went through the House of Lords also in a single night, although Lord Salisbury, speaking for the Tories, denied that any sufficient case had been made out for the course which the Government had proposed under the influence of a sudden panic. Lord Cranbrook and other peers criticised the bill sharply enough, but it was obvious that the Conservatives would not take on themselves the responsibility of actually opposing the measure. In the House of Lords, therefore, the Bill passed through all its stages at once, and it received the royal assent the next day. Now, in considering the deficiencies or the defects of the measure, it must be borne in mind that any Government would in like circumstances have believed itself compelled to bring forward some measure at once in order to avert a danger which it reasonably assumed to be imminent. As we have had to remark more than once in the course of this History, it is hardly possible to bring in a satisfactory measure when the Government is impelled to do something simply because it believes that something or other will have to be done. The Explosives Bill had the almost unavoidable defects of all measures introduced under such conditions. Two other facts have to be noticed as part of the subsequent history of this Act. The first is, that all the really serious attempts at outrage by dynamite took place after the Explosives Bill had been passed into law. We shall hear of these attempts later on. The second fact to be noticed is, that in some of the most serious prosecutions of men charged with

dynamite plots the Government did not put the prisoners on trial under the provisions of the Explosives Act, but under the provisions of the Treason Felony Act. There can be no doubt that a wave of dynamite conspiracy was at this time passing over Europe. Some Irishmen in America were undoubtedly preaching what was called the 'gospel of dynamite'; but it is only right to say that these men were few, were worthless, and were utterly repudiated by the vast masses of their countrymen in the United States. In this country it was a common habit to write as if the Fenians and the dynamiters were one and the same party. Nothing could have been more unjust to the Fenians, whose only aim was to gain the freedom of their country by open rebellion. Such a policy was, undoubtedly, wild and desperate, but it would be utterly unfair to confound it with the schemes and plots of a few men who strove to substitute private and promiscuous massacre for any manner of constitutional agitation, or even of open rebellion. It is only fair also to say, that during the whole time of the dynamite attempts the English public in general did not lose its head for a moment. The English public, to adopt an American phrase, did not 'scare worth a scent'; that is, did not show alarm enough to make it worth any man's while to spend that small coin in trying to frighten the English people. But the new phase of crime did undoubtedly add very much to the troubles of the Government, and the troubles also of the Irish Nationalist members. Meanwhile all sorts of

measures were being put forward, both by the Government and the Irish Home Rulers, in order to deal with the Irish Land question. Schemes of emigration were suggested by ministers, but it was pointed out, reasonably enough, that Ireland had been bleeding for more than forty years by the continuous flow of emigration. She had lost quite half her population within that time, and had come down from nearly nine millions to little more than four millions. Now, of course, it might be argued that the Irishmen who emigrated were much the better personally for the emigration. They went out and settled in the great American Republic or in Canada. Ulster men generally went to Canada; Munster, Leinster and Connaught men to the United States. In either place they seemed to thrive and prosper. The Irishman in the United States, if he had any perseverance, energy and good conduct, soon became prosperous and successful. Only in America, said John Mitchel, can you find the humbler class of Irishman with spending-money in his pockets. But, of course, to follow out this principle of emigration would be to depopulate by degrees the whole of Ireland—to do practically the same thing for Ireland that William the Silent thought of doing at one crisis for Holland: to break down the dykes and let in the ocean, and set up a new Holland under the Southern Cross. Now, it would have been regarded as an intolerable calamity by Irishmen if the land of their birth, which they loved with a passionate love, were to be unpeopled altogether of the men who

were best qualified to serve her. For it has to be remembered that in all schemes of emigration the strong, the energetic, the adventurous and the hopeful are the men who emigrate, and the old, the weak and the spiritless remain at home. Therefore the best-intentioned schemes for an Irish emigration assisted by the Government only tended to make Ireland a sort of miserable home for the invalid.

There were some Irishmen then—there are some Irishmen even now—to whom the painful doubt occurred whether it would not be better for the whole Irish peasant and artisan population to migrate to the United States, to Canada, to Australasia, to South America, and to South Africa, and give the island of their birth over to Dublin Castle and to the landlord class. But this extremely pessimistic view of Ireland's affairs was not likely to be accepted by the majority of the men and women still living on the soil of Ireland. The various emigration schemes, some of them suggested and promoted and pressed forward by undoubtedly patriotic Irishmen, came to nothing. Mr. Parnell put forward some proposals for migration rather than emigration—that is, for the removal of families from what were called the 'congested districts' in Ireland to other regions where the whole soil was given up to the pasture of cattle. These proposals, too, came to little or nothing in the end. The great trouble was that the House of Commons was overdone with work. The business of England, Ireland and Scotland had to be almost entirely neglected, in order that the business of

Ireland might be taken in hand, and allowed to drop out of hand again. It was found almost impossible to pass any valuable legislation for England, Scotland, or Wales, and nothing just yet was accomplished of the slightest conceivable value to Ireland. The work of the House of Commons was reduced to a mere scramble, into which everybody rushed at the same time, and out of which nobody got anything that he wanted to have. We cannot recollect any time in which the effort at legislation was more barren of results and more bitter in the struggle than that which is illustrated by the history of Parliament from 1880 to 1883.

Nor, on the other hand, is it possible to recall any time in Parliament during which the House of Commons worked so unceasingly, and under such troublesome conditions. Day was turned into night, and night into day. The business had to be done, such as it was, by relays of Ministerialists, and of what we may call the official Opposition, working in turn like the shifts in a mine, and all directed against the Irish Nationalist party and the Fourth party led by Lord Randolph Churchill. This Fourth party often supported the Irish Nationalist members, not out of any particular concern for the troubles or the claims of Ireland, but partly for the fun of the thing, partly because the members of the Fourth party thought their Tory leaders—Sir Stafford Northcote, and Mr. Cross, and the rest—were too slow and stolid and quiet, and partly because each member of the Fourth party felt that there was something in him which

ought to come out in Parliamentary strife. They were above all things fighters in those days—D'Artagnan Churchill and his three comrade musketeers—and they saw in the Irish Nationalist members another party much larger in numbers, which also had a genius and a passion for fight. The difference between the Irishmen and the Fourth party was, that the Irishmen had a distinct cause and purpose to fight for, which it was their absolute business to fight for, while the Fourth Party were only fighting with the hope of finding out some cause for which it would be proper to make a battle.

So the weary sessions went on, full of quarrel, thorny, and utterly barren. The feud between the Liberal Government and the Irish members seemed at one time hopeless of reconciliation. Mr. Gladstone began to be for a while almost as much disappointed with the Irish Nationalists as Mr. Forster had shown himself to be. But Mr. Gladstone was a man of quite different temperament from Mr. Forster, and he was learning lessons from the crisis which were destined to mould and influence his future statesmanship. Mr. Gladstone never was of the mood to say: 'That man is opposed to me; therefore he must be in the wrong; therefore he must be my enemy; and therefore I must refuse to listen to what he says.' There were many impassioned debates in which Mr. Gladstone attacked the leading Irish members, and the leading Irish members attacked Mr. Gladstone; but Mr. Gladstone continued all the while to study the Irish question, and to take account of every-

thing that was said, even by the most extreme of the Irish National party. All the time, too, the very sense of disappointment felt by the Irish members towards Mr. Gladstone was another evidence of the fact that in their hearts they had long been looking to him as the statesman who would redress their grievances. Meanwhile the Tories at intervals were always trying to revive the question of the Kilmainham Treaty, and to make out that the Government had done something disloyal and shameful when they listened to the suggestion of Mr. Parnell, that an honourable arrangement might be come to which would enable the Liberal Government to do justice to the Irish tenantry, and enable the Irish National party to help the Government in passing measures of genuine reform for Great Britain and for Ireland. The Government was in the peculiar position of being denounced by the official Tories as having humiliated England for the sake of gratifying the Irish Nationalists, and by the Irish Nationalists as having abandoned Ireland for the sake of conciliating the official Tories. There seemed for a long time no way out of this welter and chaos of conflicting forces. The methods of Parliamentary work seemed like some great piece of machinery which has suddenly gone out of gear, and where wheels and pistons, and rods and weights, go up and down incessantly, and never fail to keep up noise and motion, without the accomplishment of any practical result.

In February 1883 an event took place of much importance to literature and to politics. This was

the election of Mr. John Morley as the representative of Newcastle-on-Tyne by a large majority over the Conservative candidate. It was at a bye-election caused by the retirement of Mr. Ashton Dilke, brother of Sir Charles Dilke. Mr. Ashton Dilke had been in sadly failing health for some time, and he sought rest and softer air in Algiers, where, however, he died soon after. Mr. John Morley had twice before tried for election to the House of Commons. He contested the borough of Blackburn in 1869, and the city of Westminster in 1880, and on both occasions he was defeated. He was one of the foremost literary men of his time. He had written 'Edmund Burke,' an historical study which is a masterpiece in its way, a life of Voltaire and of Rousseau, a book on Diderot and the Encyclopædists, and many essays on historical, political and social subjects. There was a feeling amongst many members of the House of Commons that John Morley was destined to be a Parliamentary failure. The average English member of the House of Commons has not much faith in the possibility of literary men in that assembly. He does not believe that they can ever become really good Parliamentary speakers, for all the example of Disraeli and Bulwer Lytton. Therefore such men shook their heads knowingly when John Morley came into Parliament, and declared their opinion that it would have been much better if he had stuck to his desk, and let the House of Commons alone. The same sort of prediction was freely indulged in when Mr. Leonard Courtney first came

into Parliament. Mr. Courtney was a distinguished journalist, and a writer of leading articles for the *Times*, as Robert Lowe had been in the old days. 'Mark my words,' said a writer in a very influential London weekly paper, 'Mr. Courtney will be a dead failure in the House of Commons.' Mr. Courtney, in point of fact, became a conspicuous and a genuine Parliamentary success. The result, perhaps, was even more striking in the case of Mr. John Morley. Mr. Morley, coming straight from the literary man's study into the tempestuous atmosphere of the House of Commons, soon rose to be one of the most effective debaters in the whole assembly, and outside the House proved himself to be one of the three or four great platform speakers we have in this country. His maiden speech in the House of Commons was delivered under trying conditions. He was speaking in support of an amendment to the address proposed by Mr. Parnell, and he maintained that there was no remedy for the existing condition of things in Ireland, except such a reform in the principle and the conditions of government as would secure the confidence and the support of the Irish people. Some of the Tories became rather obstreperous in their objection to this argument, and Mr. Morley was interrupted now and again, in a manner which is very unusual when a member rises for the first time to address the House of Commons. Perhaps there was, however, not an unflattering tribute even in the interruptions. They proved, at least, that those who interrupted regarded Mr. Morley's arguments as something much

more important than the easy generalities of an ordinary maiden speech. Mr. Morley preserved his coolness, and retorted on the interrupters with spirit and effect; and from that time forth he went on rising and rising in the estimation of the House of Commons and of the public. Nor did literature lose all by the change, for Mr. Morley did not drop his pen when he became a practical legislator, and has yet, we are sure, much good literary work to give to the public and the world.

CHAPTER VIII.

REFORM AMID STORM.

THE intelligent foreigner, to whose enlightened judgment we once used to be fond of referring so many subjects, must often have been puzzled about the reasons for the resignation of an English Ministry. Of course there are great questions in dispute on the decision of which would naturally depend the existence of an Administration. Even in the American Republic, where the Ministry is solely under the control of the President, and does not come in or go out because of any vote in either House or Congress, it is perfectly well understood that an English Government must go out of office after having been defeated on some great question of domestic or foreign policy. But the intelligent foreigner, European or American, must sometimes find it hard indeed to comprehend why a Ministry which was quite strong and prevailing yesterday should fall out of existence to-day because of a division on some question concerning which nobody really seems to have cared two straws. The time at which we have now arrived gives ample illustration of this peculiarity in our Parliamentary system. An

Englishman fairly well acquainted with the politics of his country, even an Englishman who then was, and now is, a member of the House of Commons, might be unable to answer at a moment's notice the question, Why did the Liberal Government go out of office in 1885, and why did the Tories go out of office in the very same year?

An ordinary member of Parliament would probably have to refer to 'Hansard' or some other book of guidance to remind himself of what it was that happened to upset an apparently solid Government on these two occasions. Later still there occurred the upset of the Liberal Government with which we shall have to deal in its time, an upset which was totally unexpected by the leading men of either side of the House of Commons, and on a question in which not one man out of ten thousand throughout the whole country felt the slightest active interest. Sometimes, of course, it happens in such cases that an Administration has, according to the French phrase, exhausted its mandate—has done all it wanted to do, is not ready for any fresh work, and is, therefore, not unwilling to snatch at any decent chance for giving up the game and resting on its laurels. Sometimes, too, the Government has exhausted its mandate in a different way. It has striven hard to accomplish various purposes, and has not thoroughly succeeded in any, and it begins to think the game is hopeless, and is willing to attempt what is called riding for a fall. There is always a chance that an appeal to the country, if

that can be fairly brought about, may redress the balance of influences, and give the reforming Government which has accomplished its reforms a fresh start in a new direction, or give the reforming Government which has failed in its reforms a new chance of carrying them to success. Therefore it is hardly possible for an outside observer, even though an Englishman, and even though an ordinary member of Parliament, to understand always why a Prime Minister should suddenly throw up the cards because he has lost some hand which nobody supposes to be of the slightest importance to the results of the game. The Liberal Government of 1885 went out of office on a question connected with the details of the financial scheme, concerning which the great bulk of the public were totally indifferent. One could, of course, understand if it were the theory, or the rule, or the practice of the Constitution that a Government must go out of office the moment a majority had decided against any one of its proposals. But there is no such theory; there could be no such theory. Under the rule of such a system a continuous Administration would be impossible. A Government brings in a measure full of complications, which, while intended to reach at some great central purpose, involves the Administration in a number of working details. It would be out of all reason to suppose that a Government was bound to go out of office at once because the House of Commons, sitting in committee, refused to accept some one particular and minor proposition for the working of a clause in

the bill. Therefore there is always a certain latitude left to a Government to say whether an adverse vote is a decision to be accepted and acted upon, or whether it has to be taken as a declaration of want of confidence, and followed by the abandonment of the measure or by an immediate resignation. We have had an illustration of this principle quite lately, when a Conservative Government, having had to abandon the most important of its measures during a session, yet kept on its way because it had still a strong majority behind it for general purposes; and nobody made any serious complaint that the Government did not forthwith go out of office. But it sometimes happens that, without any sudden and striking catastrophe in the House of Commons, a great many things, some of them large and some of them little, go wrong with a Government about the same time, and then the Government may be compelled to consider whether anything is to be gained by striving to hold on in the face of a number of difficulties any of which might, if coming alone, have been easily got over, but which, all pressing together, make it apparently hopeless to conduct with any satisfaction the work of administration. This, or something like it, had now become the case with the Government of which Mr. Gladstone was at the head. The troubles were many, and they all came about the same time. The troubles were internal and external.

The external troubles with which the Government was surrounded darkened and deepened during 1884 and 1885. One great trouble was that in

Egypt, where the Mahdi still held his own, and where the hero Gordon was still shut up in Khartoum. There was a strange, and to this day an unaccountable, delay about the measures to be taken for Gordon's rescue. People said that the Government had no hope of being able to do anything to save him; and a Government is in sore straits when people believe that there is something that it ought to do and cannot even try to do. At last an expedition was arranged to go out to the relief of Gordon. Perhaps it was but a half-hearted enterprise at the best. Perhaps the Government had only too good reason to believe that Gordon was beyond the help of any relief expedition. The trial had to be made, however, and the expedition was put under the command of a man as competent as could be found in England—Sir Garnet (now Lord) Wolseley. The public had the utmost confidence in Sir Garnet Wolseley's capacity. He was understood to be a soldier who fought by the book of arithmetic. He had been tried on two great occasions before, and he had done his work, if one might put it so, up to time. The Red River expedition, and the Egyptian expedition against Arabi Pasha, had been marvels of promptitude, energy, exactness and success. Everyone in these islands felt sure that if the skill of a commander could effect the rescue of Gordon, Sir Garnet Wolseley would accomplish that triumph. But the difficulties in the way of rapid movement were beyond the skill of Sir Garnet Wolseley, as they would have been beyond the skill of another

Wellington or another Napoleon. The English commander had to battle his way from step to step. He had to fight his road through the Arabs, and many brave lives had to be sacrificed on his side. One of the most lamented of the dead was Colonel Burnaby—'Fred' Burnaby, as he was familiarly called in London. Fred Burnaby was the very type of a chivalrous, adventurous soldier. His superb presence, his almost gigantic height, his singularly handsome face, his sweet, boyish, captivating manners, made him dear to everyone who knew him. It seemed of evil omen for the whole expedition when the news came to London of Colonel Burnaby's death. The world soon heard the worst news of all. No commander could have forced his way under such difficulties to Khartoum in time to rescue General Gordon. By a curious mishap, not often fate-inflicted on such a journal, *Punch* came out one week with a cartoon depicting the gladsome meeting of Wolseley and Gordon at Khartoum. Immediately after came the news that Gordon was dead before the relief expedition could reach him. It would be needless to say that the death of Gordon was a terrible blow to the Liberal Government. Gordon was an ideal hero; and an Administration of saints and sages could not have been saved from reproach if an expedition for such a purpose had failed under its management, although by no fault of those who sent it out or those who conducted it. Yet the Ministry did not fall under the weight of that shock. It was impossible to found on it any vote of censure which a reasonable

House of Commons could have accepted. But we all know well enough from frequent experience that a Government just barely getting over a great shock is liable to be brought down by some small, sudden, and unexpected wound. So it was with the Government of Mr. Gladstone in 1885. The budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Childers, was the immediate or the ostensible cause of the overthrow.

There had been before this time a sort of agglomeration of dynamite plots, resulting in explosions in different parts of London. On May 30, 1884, there was a dynamite explosion at the Junior Carlton Club and in Scotland Yard. A great deal of damage was done to the club-house, inside and outside, and also to the neighbouring Army and Navy Club, and other buildings in the near vicinity. In Scotland Yard, the Criminal Investigation Department was much injured; and from the dynamiters' point of view there would seem more reason for attempting to injure a criminal investigation department than for an attempt against the Junior Carlton Club. No lives were lost in any of these explosions, nor were any serious personal injuries inflicted upon anybody. No thanks, however, are due to the dynamiters for that, inasmuch as in all cases the attempts were made in a most crowded region, and where anybody might have expected that there would be a prodigal destruction of life. On December 13 a dynamite attempt was made upon no less solid a structure than London Bridge itself. A charge of dynamite had been attached to one of the buttresses; and the

explosion took place in the dusk of the evening, shattering many windows and inflicting a certain amount of injury on various foot-passengers, but leaving the masonry of the bridge practically uninjured. Two lives are believed to have been lost in this attempt, and, indeed, there seems no reason to impugn the belief. But the two lives were those of the dynamiters who had planned and were endeavouring to carry out the work of destruction. This was, indeed, one of the very few cases where anybody suffered death because of a dynamite explosion in London, and it is certainly a singular fact that the only victims in this case were the men who had made themselves instruments of the crime. About two in the afternoon on January 24, 1885, the Tower of London and the Houses of Parliament were the scenes of simultaneous explosions. On the steps leading to the crypt or underground chapel of the House of Commons, a lady visiting the place happened to observe an odd-looking package lying on the ground. She at once gave information to the police in Westminster Hall, and Constable Cole seized the package, and brought it into Westminster Hall, where it suddenly exploded with a tremendous noise, blowing a hole in the pavement about six feet in breadth, crashing another hole in the roof of Westminster Hall, that noble roof of Irish oak which Macaulay has described admiringly in his essay on Warren Hastings, and smashing all the glass windows of the Hall. The sound of the explosion had hardly died away when a crash far louder than

thunder was heard in the inner part of the building, and it was then found that a dynamite machine had been placed under one of the seats in the House of Commons itself. The explosion tore off the doors of the House everywhere, brought down the Peers' Gallery and Strangers' Gallery in a mere shapeless mass of ruin, tore up the green benches of the members here, there, and everywhere, destroyed the panelling and stained-glass windows, and made the House of Commons look a grotesque and a melancholy scene of wreckage. Two policemen were seriously injured: one the plucky constable Cole, who had tried to carry off the explosive package from the crypt, and who remained for a long time a heavy sufferer from the hurt he had received. Constable Cole was a most attentive and obliging police-officer, and was a great favourite among all the members of the House of Commons, perhaps even especially among the Irish members. Some attention was called at the time to the fact that Saturday was selected for this attempt, that being a day when the House never sits in the early part of the session. In any case the House had not resumed its sittings. The comment was made by various English newspapers in a pure spirit of fair-play, even to dynamiters, because it was suggested that the intention might be, not so much to destroy human life, as to give the English public notice of what might be done in that way should the criminals be tempted further. It has, however, to be remarked that on every Saturday when the House is not actually sitting the general public are

admitted to enter and inspect the chamber of legislation. The general public were fortunate indeed in not having attended in great numbers on this particular day. The explosion at the Tower of London resulted in great damage done to the large hall and the passage leading into St. John's Chapel. The only victims in this case were two little girls and three little boys, who were much hurt and cut by falling stones and shattered glass. These poor little mites were thus made to do penance for the alleged offences of the British Empire. Perhaps the most wonderful thing about all these attempts, happening as they did almost at the same time, was that so few lives were lost. Any one of us, if asked beforehand what must be the result of dynamite explosions in Pall Mall, in the Tower of London, and in the House of Commons on the public visiting day, would have set down a tremendous sacrifice of human life as absolutely inevitable. Providence, however, had otherwise decreed, and, as we have said, the two principal victims, if not the only victims, so far as the destruction of life was concerned, were the two assassins at London Bridge.

The Government, although evidently weakened and sinking, did not go out of office without having done some good and substantial work for the Constitution and for the country. It had long been understood that some Liberal Government must make an effort to remould the Parliamentary franchise in counties and in boroughs, and to recast the arrangement of the constituencies. There were two distinct

problems to be dealt with: first, the question of franchise, and next, the question of redistribution of seats. With regard to the Franchise question, it was felt by all Liberals that the vote was even still, after the measure of 1867, far too restricted to allow of a popular and genuine representation of the country. With regard to the distribution of seats, the most flagrant anomalies and injustice were still existing. In some cases pitiful little boroughs with only a few hundred inhabitants returned as many representatives as some great and important counties. Then there were purely imaginary divisions of constituencies which threw the balance of representation quite out of gear. Attempt after attempt had been made by private members to get rid of some of these anomalies, inequalities, and absurdities. Sir George Trevelyan, for example, had brought forward year after year his motion for the equalising of the county franchise with that which prevailed in cities and boroughs, and without any actual success. Only, in fact, the Liberal Government could possibly deal with the evils from which the country suffered. Mr. Gladstone determined to take up the question at the earliest possible opportunity. His followers all knew quite well that he intended to do so, and they only waited for what he might consider to be the opportune moment. But in the troublous year of 1884, with the Egyptian question darkening the air, and the Irish troubles exasperating men's minds in all quarters of the House of Commons, it was the feeling of many sincere Liberals that the Government was only

courting defeat by venturing on the contentious question of a reduced franchise and a reorganised constituency. Mr. Gladstone, however, was not deterred. He divided his great reform scheme into two separate portions; that is to say, into two separate bills. The first was the Franchise Bill, which he introduced into the House of Commons on February 29, 1884. The bill, he said, was introduced in fulfilment of a pledge, in obedience to a widely expressed demand, and for the purpose of adding strength to the State. He declined to argue the case of the classes to be enfranchised, as that case had been admitted in regard to borough populations fifteen years before, and had been completely approved by the experience of those fifteen years. 'I am not prepared,' he said, 'to discuss admission to the franchise now as it was discussed fifty years ago, when Lord John Russell had to state, with almost bated breath, that he expected to add in the three kingdoms half a million to the constituencies. It is not now a question of nicely calculated less or more. I take my stand upon the broad principle that the enfranchisement of capable citizens, be they few or be they many—and if they be many, so much the better—is an addition to the strength of the State. The strength of a modern State lies in the representative system. I rejoice to think that in this happy country, and in this happy Constitution, we have other sources of strength also, in the respect paid to the various orders of the State, in the authority they enjoy, and in the unbroken course which has been allowed to most

of our national traditions. But still, in the main, it is the representative system which is the strength of the modern State in general, and of the State in this country in particular.' Then he went on to explain the nature of the new Franchise Bill. The Government proposed to put the county population on the same level as the populations of cities and towns. This would, in point of fact, make the agricultural labourers in the counties voters under the same conditions as the artisans in the towns and cities. In boroughs, what were called the ancient rights franchises would be left as they were. The household franchise of 1867 would also be untouched. The ten pounds clear yearly value franchise would be extended to land held without houses or buildings; while there would be created a new franchise, which Mr. Gladstone proposed to call a service franchise, for persons who were inhabitants of a house, but were neither occupiers nor tenants—the officers of great public institutions, and the humbler men who occupied houses as caretakers. There would be, therefore, four kinds of borough franchise—the ten-pound franchise, the lodger franchise, the household franchise of 1867, and the service franchise. In the counties the franchise would be reduced to ten pounds yearly value, and the household, lodger and service franchises of the boroughs would be established in the county constituencies. The changes thus proposed for England were to be imported into Ireland and Scotland, with whatever slight differences of detail might be necessary under the existing

conditions of these two countries. No one already qualified was to be disfranchised by this measure. Everyone who was the head of a household would be enabled to become a voter. Coming to the question of redistribution, and anticipating demands from all parts of the House, Mr. Gladstone stated that the Government hoped to introduce a redistribution scheme in the next session, but did not see its way to making such a scheme a part of the franchise measure, and did not think it would be possible to carry these two great objects within the one session. He said he had no objection to give his own views, without binding any of his colleagues, as to what the general principles of a measure of redistribution ought to be. 'I do not know,' he went on to say, 'whether it need be as large a measure as that of 1831, which effected a wholesale slaughter of nominally existing boroughs and constituencies in this country. But, at any rate, it must, I think, be nearer to the measure of 1831 than to the measure of 1867.' He declared himself not at all favourable to the system of electoral districts, or to the adoption of any mere population scale. A great many Liberals, it should be said, had long been eagerly calling out for a system of equal electoral districts, and for a strict scale of population in regulating at intervals the state of each constituency. Such a system, with a provision for a periodical reorganisation of constituencies according to growing or lessening numbers, prevails in the United States, and many Englishmen thought it ought also to prevail in England.

But Mr. Gladstone believed that no such radical alteration in our system was really demanded by public opinion in general; and also he held that in such a country as Great Britain we were bound to pay much respect to its traditions and its habitual ways. 'I cannot,' he said, 'pretend to have the fears as to electoral districts and as to their consequences which I believe many gentlemen entertain. My objection to them would be of a purely practical character. In the first place, if you were to adopt electoral districts, they would involve a very great deal of unnecessary displacement and disturbance of conditions which I think you ought to respect. Next, I should say that in a sound measure of redistribution the distinction of town and country known to all our electoral law as borough and shire ought to be maintained. Although our franchise is nearly identical, yet that is not the question. The question is, whether there is not in the pursuits and associations of the place, and in its social circumstances, a difference between town and country, between borough and shire, which it is expedient, becoming, and useful to maintain. I would respect within moderate limits the individuality of constituencies, and not attempt to place towns which have had representation for many generations precisely and mathematically on the footing of towns that have not.'

The general impression produced by this foreshadowing of the projected Redistribution Bill was decidedly favourable. Many intelligent Conservatives,

not unwilling to accept the leading principles of reform, had been under some apprehension that Mr. Gladstone might be persuaded by certain of his followers to go in for what was called an 'Americanising' of our whole electoral system. Such men were greatly relieved when they found that Mr. Gladstone was not inclined to apply the principle of equal electoral districts to these islands, and that he was disposed, as far as possible, to pay homage to the majesty of tradition. One very important passage in Mr. Gladstone's speech was that in which he told the House that England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales were to be treated in this measure on a principle of absolute equality. Nothing, he declared, would induce the Government to depart from their determination to adhere to that principle. 'All the three countries have a case for enfranchisement, arising out of the insufficiency of the present constituencies as compared with what they might be; but of the three cases, the strongest is that of Ireland.' 'I could bear no part,' he said, 'in the responsibility of passing, perhaps, a Reform Bill for England and for Scotland, and then leaving a Reform Bill for Ireland to take its chance.' These words, as it has been well observed, 'were addressed to the House of Commons, but they were levelled at the House of Lords.' Mr. Gladstone desired to make it perfectly plain to the hereditary chamber that the Government was determined to regard the franchise in Ireland as a part, and an essential part, of its scheme, and that it would listen to no suggestion for any change in that resolve. The

first reading of the bill was carried without any serious opposition; and, indeed, there seemed already very little doubt that the measure was destined to pass into law. There was a protest made on behalf of some members of the House in favour of the rights of minorities and the principle of proportionate representation; but the old-fashioned Tory view, which saw evil in all reform merely because it was reform, did not much influence the debate.

We need not follow the discussion minutely or to any great length. The different stages of the bill had to be postponed again and again. The affairs of Egypt took up the attention of the House time after time. The bill, however, had its third reading on June 26, and was at once sent up to the House of Lords. Lord Cairns immediately gave notice of his intention to move a resolution to the effect that, while the House of Lords would be prepared to concur in a well-considered and complete scheme for the extension of the franchise, yet that House did not think it right to assent to the second reading of a Bill, having for its object a fundamental change in the electoral body, which is not accompanied by provisions ensuring the full and free representation of the people, or by any adequate security that the bill shall not come into operation except as an entire scheme. Such an amendment, if carried, would of course be fatal to the early progress of the measure. The Government did not believe that it could possibly undertake to give the pledge which the Conservatives in the House of Lords, or at least the

majority of them, were demanding. Still, there seemed to be some indication of the possibility of an agreement between the Government and the Opposition, even in the House of Lords. Most of the peers who spoke in support of Lord Cairns's amendment disclaimed any desire to prevent the passing of a bill for the further extension of the suffrage. What they contended was, that it was the interest of the people to have a symmetrical scheme before them, in order that they might know whether full justice was to be done to the popular claim. Some of the Conservative peers spoke of themselves as being much better friends of the people than Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal Government. All they wanted, they declared, was that full justice should be done to the people of these islands. Nothing could be more delightful than their disclaimer of any objection to the fullest franchise, provided only they could be certain about the nature of the plan for redistribution. It was suggested by many of the Conservative peers that the Government should not prorogue Parliament, but merely adjourn the sittings of the Houses until the autumn, and then go on with the Franchise Bill, and with a scheme for redistribution also. The Government declared itself not merely anxious, but even determined, to bring in a Redistribution Bill at the earliest possible moment. But it declared also that it could not undertake to give the absolute pledge which the Conservative peers were inclined to demand. Still, the whole condition of things was very different from that which existed at

the time of Lord Grey's Reform Bill. Then an extension of the franchise was opposed simply because it was an extension of the franchise, and on the ground that an extension of the franchise would be a danger to the State, would invite revolution, and bring about 'red ruin and the breaking up of laws.' The condition of things was much the same in 1866 and 1867. Then, too, the opponents of Parliamentary reform opposed it on the ground that it would place the government of England at the mercy of an anarchical mob, and of the dreadful people who, as Mr. Lowe put it, 'live in these small houses.' Now, however, the condition was entirely different. With some few exceptions in either House, Parliament was apparently converted of a sudden into a body of persons all alike anxious for the extension of the suffrage and the reorganisation of the constituencies, and only differing as to the most rapid and effective way of accomplishing the great reform. In such circumstances there was an obvious opportunity for compromise and arrangement. Lord Cairns's amendment was carried by a majority of 205 to 146, and thus the further progress of the measure was practically put a stop to for that session. But negotiations were instantly opened between the Government and the leaders of Opposition in both Houses. The Government did not see its way to an adjournment of the sittings, and believed that there would be more advantage in a regular prorogation, and the summoning of a winter session, to go on first with the Franchise Bill, and

next with the bill for redistribution. Meetings on both sides of the controversy were held all over the country, and the negotiations were going on day after day. It need hardly be said that the negotiations led to all manner of misunderstandings; that public explanations were given on the one side which were repudiated on the other side; that somebody was always described as having said something which he instantly declared he never had said, and that frequent complaints were made about the publication of interchanges of opinion which never ought to have got into print. All this sort of thing, of course, is the regular commonplace of any attempt at arrangement between rival statesmen.

Still there were some great facts made manifest to all the public. One was, that the House of Lords disclaimed any intention of setting itself up against the popular will; and the other was, that the Liberal Government was prepared, while surrendering no principle of its Franchise Bill or of its redistribution scheme, to go into council with its opponents, and invite their assistance in the moulding of a satisfactory measure of reform. Under these conditions Parliament was prorogued by Royal Commission. Mr. Gladstone made several speeches during the recess, in one of which he said, 'I do not believe that the House of Lords has as yet placed itself in a position of irretrievable error. I believe it to be possible that it may go back, and may go back with dignity and with honour.' It began to be clear to everybody who was anywhere near to the centre of

political life that the negotiations would naturally come to a satisfactory issue.

There was for all this some disturbance in Birmingham in the October of 1884, owing to the fact that a Conservative meeting was held in Aston Park, and that the Liberals got up a counter-demonstration outside the park gates. The result was what might not unnaturally be expected. Part of the park was broken into. The rival crowds came into collision, and there was a scene of some wreckage, and destruction of furniture and ornaments and garden properties. These riots, if they may be called so, were the subject of repeated discussion during the winter session which followed. Lord Randolph Churchill endeavoured to fix Mr. Chamberlain with some responsibility for the disturbance. It was during one of these discussions that Lord Randolph Churchill used a somewhat vigorous but not altogether polite expression, afterwards well-remembered in Parliamentary life, when he expressed his determination to 'draw the badger'—in other words, to compel Mr. Chamberlain to come out and defend himself. Mr. Chamberlain, it seems, had previously spoken of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff as Lord Randolph's 'jackal.' However it came about, it was certainly unlucky that the two demonstrations should have been made on the same day, and in almost the same place. Sir George Trevelyan once told an amusing story to the House of Commons which was connected with his administration of Irish affairs. He had made it a rule never to allow a meeting of

Nationalists and a meeting of the Orangemen to be held in the same locality and on the same day. A deputation once waited on him to urge him to allow, under what were suggested as exceptional circumstances, two rival meetings to be held in the same neighbourhood and on the same day. Sir George was firm, and he pointed out that the best thing for those who were appealing to him was to allow their opponents to hold the first meeting, and afterwards to confute them. 'But,' said one of the deputation, very pertinently, 'how can we confute them if we are not there at the time?' Possibly some of the Birmingham Radicals thought that the best way of confuting their Tory opponents was to be there at the time; to hold a demonstration on the outside of the park, while the others were holding their demonstration inside. Nothing very serious came of the disturbance, and, indeed, there was but little political passion aflame in the country. Most people felt assured that the negotiations which were known to be going on would result sooner or later in a satisfactory arrangement.

The winter session of Parliament was opened on October 23, 1884. The Queen's Speech announced that the two Houses had been called together 'to give further consideration to the great subject of the representation of the people in Parliament.' Next day the Franchise Bill, in substance just the same as that which was introduced in the former session, was brought into the House of Commons, and read a first time without division, or even discussion. On

November 6, Mr. Gladstone moved the second reading in a speech which occupied but a short time. An amendment, insisting that it ought to be accompanied by a Redistribution Bill, was formally moved; but as it was now known by everybody that negotiations for an arrangement were going on, and going on favourably, the amendment was not pressed, and on November 7 the second reading was carried by 372 votes against 232. On the 11th of the month the Bill was read a third time without a division. It was now known that the negotiations were in the hands of Mr. Gladstone, Lord Hartington, and Sir Charles Dilke on the side of the Government, and of Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote on the part of the Opposition. The result of all this was that the House of Lords became willing to accept the Franchise Bill, and Mr. Gladstone announced that in a few days he meant to introduce his Redistribution Bill. On December 1, Mr. Gladstone brought in his measure. The bill proposed to increase the number of members of the House by 12, thus making the total number 670. The 12 members were to be given to Scotland, which had been left up to this time with an admittedly inadequate representation. Scotland was now to have 72 members. There were 6 disfranchised seats, which were now to be restored to representation and given to England. Ireland and Wales were to retain their representation as before. Ireland had 103 members, and some contention was made that that country was over-represented in proportion to its population. But it was pointed out

with much effect by Mr. Bright, that the Act of Union provided that Ireland should have not less than 100 members; and the fact was dwelt upon by other speakers that two of the 103 members—the representatives of the University of Dublin—were not elected by a popular suffrage. Therefore, even those who were inclined to go strongly in for a strict proportion of representation to population were not much inclined to disturb the Government arrangement, which had already been agreed to by the leaders of Opposition. There was a good deal of discussion as to the proposed division of nearly all the great cities into different wards or districts, each returning one member. Mr. Courtney, who was then Financial Secretary for the Treasury, was so strongly opposed to this principle that he resigned his office. The Franchise Bill passed through all its readings in the House of Lords, and became law just before the adjournment for the Christmas recess. The Redistribution of Seats Bill came on again early in March, and Sir John Lubbock moved an instruction to sanction the transfer of votes, so as to provide for the representation of minorities. The instruction was rejected by a large majority. The bill was finally carried without much trouble through both Houses of Parliament. Nothing seems to us to have been more satisfactory than the principle of practical arrangement which was adopted in this instance by the leaders of the Government and the leaders of Opposition. As might naturally be expected, a good deal of objection was made to it

by the men of extreme opinions on both sides. Some of the Radicals insisted that the Government could have got better terms if they had stood out against any proposal for negotiation and arrangement. Some of the Tories, on the other hand, went about declaring that their leaders had sacrificed far too much, and were giving England over to mob rule. The great majority on both sides, however, were satisfied that the principle had worked well, and set a good example for the future. No serious fault has since been found in the working of this scheme of reform, which was agreed to by the common consent of the leading minds representing Liberalism and Conservatism in the country.

Yet it could not be supposed by any reasonable man to be a final settlement of the whole franchise question, even for a generation. The principle of 'One Man, One Vote' was enunciated more than once during the debates, and the time must come when that principle will have to be established in our legislation, and a man will no longer be allowed to have one vote for his house in the West-end, a second for his office in the City, a third for his country house in one of the shires, a fourth for his shooting-place in Scotland, and so on.

CHAPTER IX.

FALL OF THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT.

During the early days of 1884 the House of Commons saw a change in the occupant of the Speaker's chair. It had been well known amongst members for some time that Sir Henry Brand found the duties of his position too severe and too wearisome for him. Few public offices can be more trying to a man who has passed his middle age than the position of Speaker of the House of Commons. At the best of times it is a place which tries the patience and the nerves. Sir Henry Brand's successor, at a later period, spoke feelingly of 'the almost intolerable tedium' which the Speaker has to endure. The Speaker takes the chair of the House at three o'clock on the ordinary four working days, and, except when the House is in committee, he retains that place until any hour of the morning to which it may please the House to prolong its debates; and he has only one interval, of about twenty minutes, at eight o'clock or so, for some sort of a hasty dinner. We are speaking now of the conditions under which the chair was held in Sir Henry Brand's occupancy of the office. Some arrangements were later made which enabled the

Speaker to provide himself with a temporary substitute when he required relief from the work. But in Sir Henry Brand's time the duties were continuous, and practically inexorable. A late Serjeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons used to tell his friends, good-humouredly, that he could never have endured the wearisomeness of his position if he had not trained himself to exclude from his mind all understanding of what was going on in the House. But the Serjeant-at-Arms had no need to concern himself with any debate going on in the House. If on some rare occasion he was called on to intervene, he was only called on by the voice and the authority of the Speaker; and it did not matter in the least to him whether he had or had not heard one single word of the debate on Mr. Bradlaugh's claim for admission to the House, or on some proposed suspension of certain Irish members. The Serjeant-at-Arms might have spent his official hours, if he liked, and if he had a taste that way, in the composing of poems, or the scheming out of novels or plays, or the preparation of a book about 'Public Men Whom I Have Known.' But the position of Speaker of the House of Commons was something quite different. The Speaker had to keep, if he could, his attention fastened on every debate and the argument of every orator who took part in it. He never could tell when some point of order might not be raised which would compel him to declare whether the honourable member for this place or that had not transgressed the rules of the House by the words of his interrupted sentence. It

would never do for the Speaker to have to ask one of the clerks at the table what the honourable member had been saying, and what the row was all about. Therefore the hapless Speaker, in the best of times, was compelled to pay a close attention to what Wishy—to adopt Mr. Disraeli's nomenclature—had been saying, and to what Washy was delivering in reply.

Then, again, the Serjeant-at-Arms is relieved at intervals by the Deputy-Serjeant; but in Sir Henry Brand's time of office there was no Deputy to take his place, unless when the House was in committee. These were the ordinary troubles of the office, and they were troubles enough in all conscience. But Sir Henry Brand, in the later years of his Speakership, had fallen upon gloomy and distressful days. He saw the birth and the growth of systematic obstruction. He had to be familiar with all-night sittings. He had, on one occasion, to accomplish an actual *coup d'état* in order to bring to a close the debate which, avowedly kept on for the mere purpose of obstruction, had already occupied days and nights. Sir Henry Brand was a man of kindly, genial nature, absolutely unprejudiced and impartial in his conduct of debate. He had to come into sharp and bitter collision with the Irish Nationalist members, some at least of whom were on terms of personal friendship with him, and to all of whom on his retirement from the chair he tendered his acknowledgment that he believed they were acting from a sense of duty to their country. Such a life was calculated to bear

down the strongest constitution; and Sir Henry Brand at this time was seventy years old. The House of Commons received the news of his retirement with general regret. The leader of the Government and the leader of Opposition were rivals in their praise of the retiring Speaker when the customary vote of thanks was proposed. Mr. Parnell, speaking for the Irish Nationalist party, explained that his colleagues and he could not actually support the vote of thanks, because they had publicly stated and fully believed that the action the Speaker had taken in the *coup d'état* we have mentioned was utterly unconstitutional, but that still they had no intention whatever of pressing their objection so far as to take a division. It was late at night when Sir Henry Brand retired from the chair, and the scene was very effective, as all the members then left in the House came up one by one to shake hands with him, and to wish him many happy years of rest. Sir Henry Brand gave up his seat in the House of Commons soon after, and went to the House of Lords with the title of Lord Hampden. His successor was Mr. Arthur Peel, son of the great statesman. Like Sir Henry Brand, Mr. Peel had been for a considerable time a Whip of the Liberal party. He had been in the House nearly twenty years when he was chosen to succeed Sir Henry Brand, and during all that time he had never made a speech of any pretension. Even his own friends could not have said from actual knowledge whether he was gifted or not with any of his father's Parliamentary eloquence. He had one brother, at least, in the House

who most certainly possessed no such gift. Therefore it was a surprise to everyone when, after the election to the Speaker's chair, Mr. Peel delivered a speech of which it is not too much to say that it was one of the most remarkable and one of the most eloquent speeches which delighted the House of Commons in our time. In manner as well as in matter it was as nearly as possible perfect. The House suddenly awakened to the knowledge that they had amongst them another Peel who might fairly compare in Parliamentary eloquence with the great Sir Robert himself, and that the discovery was made just on the occasion which, for all intents and purposes, condemned the orator to that same silence in the future which he had of his own choice imposed on himself in the past.

Mr. Peel, too, had to pass through a stormy time. He, like his predecessor, might be considered as a victim to the organic difficulties of the whole political situation in the House of Commons. New rules were constantly prepared and discussed, and at length carried, and it was hard indeed for any Speaker to adapt himself at a moment's notice to a condition of things which so often put precedent and tradition aside, and endeavoured to regulate a political convulsion by the etiquette of a debating-chamber. But even those against whom the new rules were mainly directed did not accuse any Speaker of a deliberate want of the impartial temper which ought to belong to the occupant of the chair in the House of Commons.

The discussions on the Franchise Bill met with a momentary but a most melancholy interruption in consequence of the death of Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany, the youngest of the Queen's sons. The Duke of Albany died on March 28, 1884, at Cannes, where he had gone for the benefit of his health. The immediate cause of his death was an accidental fall downstairs, which led to an infusion of blood in the brain and an epileptic convulsion with a fatal ending. The Duke had always been in delicate physical health, and had from his boyhood been given to the tastes and habits of a student. He had been for the most part cut off from the enjoyment of the out-of-door exercises in which his brothers delighted, and had been thrown back upon his books as the main interest of his life. He did not take any conspicuous part in the affairs of State and of the public; but it was remarked that whenever he did speak on any ceremonial occasion, his speech attracted universal notice every time, on account of its intellectual character and its genuine eloquence. He was in his thirty-first year when he met with the accident which ended in his death. He had been married, not quite two years before, to the Princess Helen of Waldeck, and his married life appears to have been one of happiness which might be called unclouded, but for some evidence now and then of the approaching shadow of death. His life, however, must be accounted on the whole a happy life. He loved his wife, his family, his friends, and

his studies. Like the half-poetic hero of Scott's 'Rokeby,' he turned

> From martial scenes and light,
> From Falstaff's feast and Percy's fight,
> To ponder o'er Jaques's moral strain,
> Or muse with Hamlet, wise in vain.

His death was universally regretted in these countries, and by all people abroad who had known him or known of him. Both Houses of Parliament carried addresses of condolence on Monday, March 31. Mr. Gladstone, who had been absent from the House for several days in consequence of a very severe cold, and who had had to leave to Lord Hartington the motion for the second reading of the Franchise Bill, came back to the House of Commons for a short time in order to move the vote of condolence to the Queen. A church is erected to the memory of the Duke of Albany in Cannes, to which few English visitors fail to make a pilgrimage.

On November 6 the House of Commons was shocked to hear of the death of Mr. Henry Fawcett, the Postmaster-General. Mr. Fawcett's death came on almost suddenly. Many of his Parliamentary and political friends did not even know that he was ill until the news came of his death. Not very long before he had been confined to his house for a considerable time by a more or less serious illness; but he seemed to have got over all the trouble, and to have recovered completely his robust strength. Apart from his one terrible privation, Mr. Fawcett always appeared to be a splendid specimen of robust

physical energy. He was a man of great height and commanding presence, and he had that somewhat uncommon gift, a splendid laugh. His laugh had the ring in it that might have belonged to the laugh of a glorious schoolboy, but it was not noisy or oppressive: it was entirely genial and sympathetic. Everyone admired him. Those who knew him well, loved him. He had no public or private enemy. The news of his death was not made known to the House of Commons until after question-time, and while the business of the day was going on, and any public expressions of regret had to be postponed to the close of the sitting. Then the Irish Nationalist members joined with the leader of the Government and the leader of the Opposition in expressing their deep sorrow at the loss of such a man. Up to that time it had not been the custom of the Irish Nationalist members to associate themselves with the Government and the Opposition in any such ceremonial. Later on the Irish Nationalists, as will be seen, joined publicly in the expressions of lament for the death of Mr. Bright. Mr. Fawcett was a very rising man, who would in all probability have risen, in spite of his terrible physical difficulty, to be a great statesman. He was the apt pupil and loving friend of John Stuart Mill. He was devoted to every great public cause, political or social. He was the friend of India, as he was the friend of Ireland. He should have died hereafter. He was little past fifty years of age when death closed his career.

Earlier in the same year the State lost a zealous

servant by the death of Sir Bartle Frere. We have not in this History always approved of the more recent course of policy inspired by Sir Bartle Frere. His great services in India must, however, be allowed to make all Englishmen lenient to his mistakes in South Africa. Literature and art suffered also some severe losses during the year. Mr. R. H. Horne passed out of life in Margate at a very advanced age. The existing generation hardly remembered himself or his 'Orion,' the once-famous poem, which made Edgar Allan Poe wild with enthusiastic admiration, and at the time led many people to believe that a star of the first magnitude was arising in the sky of English literature. In his later years Mr. Horne had given up all effort or hope to become a great poet. He lived a quiet, secluded, but not lonely life. He went a good deal about in the society of his intimate friends, and was often to be met at some quiet, genial dinner-party. His own strong wish before his death was that he should be buried at Edmonton, by the side of Charles Lamb; but the wish for some reason or other was not complied with, and he was buried at Margate, not very far from the last resting-place of Dante Rossetti. In April of the same year Mr. Charles Reade died, at the age of seventy. We have already spoken of Mr. Reade's career as a novelist in this History, and have only to say that he very nearly attained to a place in the foremost rank of literature. One of his novels, at least, 'The Cloister and the Hearth,' made many of his readers believe that a

new Walter Scott was arising in the world of fiction. Of later years he abandoned the field of romance, and took to what may be called novels with a purpose—novels dealing with some social grievance, or legalised injustice, which in Mr. Reade's earnest mind called to everybody for redress. He did this kind of work admirably, but it was not the best literary work of his life; and he probably knew this himself, and did not care, so long as he was doing what he believed to be right. He was a man of somewhat eccentric character, often of rather overbearing ways, and he had, in a genial, inoffensive kind of way, a very high opinion of his own capacity and genius. He made some success as a writer of plays; and he once had a strong desire to deliver a course of lectures in the United States, but he absolutely gave up the idea when he found that no American lecturing agency would guarantee to him the same amount of money which had been gathered in by Charles Dickens, the most brilliant and famous public reader who ever spoke in the English language. If we take the four or five really great novelists of the Victorian age, and are not able to class Charles Reade among them, it will be admitted that, at least among the second class, no one stands higher than the author of 'The Cloister and the Hearth,' of 'Christie Johnstone,' and of 'Peg Woffington.' A few lines may be spared to chronicle the death in the same year of Madame Taglioni, the most famous dancer that ever moved on a stage. She made her first appearance in London in 1829, and all London

and all England went wild over her, as the whole European continent had done. In the later years of her life she visited London a good deal, and she maintained herself by giving lessons in dancing. She was then quite an old woman, sweet and grave in manner, and who carried with her no reminder of the extraordinary brilliancy of her past career. One who met her at a house in London on the evening of a great Epsom day happened to ask her if she had ever seen the Derby. Her answer was pathetic in its very unconsciousness. She said that she had seen the Derby more than once '*dans ma jeunesse.*' *Dans ma jeunesse!* Such a youth, such a brilliant time, with emperors and kings for her patrons, and whole populations in rhapsody of enthusiasm about her! She bore her old age gracefully, and did not seem in the least embittered by her obscurity and her decline towards the grave.

The fall of the Administration was close at hand. The Opposition moved vote of censure after vote of censure on the Government because of the evil results in Egypt. Nothing, however, came of these attempts; nor, even when it became certain that Khartoum had fallen, and that Gordon was dead, was the Ministry shaken, at least in the sense of a Parliamentary vote against it. Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues bore them stiffly up until they had carried their two measures of Parliamentary reform, or at least made it certain that they were to be carried. As has been already said, Mr. Childers's budget was the immediate, or perhaps the ostensible, cause of the

Ministry's fall. Mr. Childers had to meet a deficit of somewhat over a million, and to supply this want he proposed to raise the income-tax from sixpence to eightpence in the pound, to increase the spirit duty by two shillings a gallon, and the beer duty by one shilling a barrel. Great objection was raised to the increase in the spirit and beer duties, and Mr. Childers made certain concessions in regard to these proposals. He offered to reduce to one shilling the increase in the spirit duties, and to retain the increase in the duties on beer only for one year.

These concessions, however, were not enough to conciliate the Opposition. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach proposed an amendment condemning absolutely the increase in the duties. Yet it was not supposed by most people, inside or outside the House of Commons, that the discussion was likely to involve the fate of the Administration. The question would be settled somehow—such was the common impression—and therefore up to the very last a serious crisis was not anticipated. On June 8, 1885, it was understood that the division would be taken on the amendment of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach to the motion for the second reading of the bill. The crowded House was a good deal surprised when Sir Charles Dilke announced the resolve of the Cabinet to regard the coming division as one on which the further existence of the Government must depend. Mr. Gladstone himself, in his speech later in the debate, confirmed the announcement of Sir Charles Dilke. Few scenes can be more exciting than that which is presented by the House

of Commons on the eve of a critical division. In this case opinions and calculations were so narrowly divided that no one on either side of the House would venture to predict the result. It may easily be imagined how men's minds are kept on a strain when it is known that the events of the next few minutes must decide whether a Government is to stand or to fall, and when no one can pretend to make any confident calculation as to the issue. Even the most important division is taken by the House with comparative composure when it is well understood that there is to be a large majority one way or the other. But when, as in the case of Mr. Childers's budget, the element of uncertainty remains to the very end, then the tension on men's minds becomes almost too strong for endurance. At last the announcement came. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's amendment was supported by 264 votes, while 252 were recorded against it. The Government, therefore, was defeated by a majority of twelve. The wildest outbreak of enthusiasm was made along the Tory benches that had ever been known in the House of Commons since Mr. Gladstone's Reform Bill of 1866 was defeated in committee. Lord Randolph Churchill went outside himself with passionate excitement. He jumped on to the green bench where he had been sitting—and jumping on a bench is a very unusual performance in the House of Commons, even in its wildest moments—and standing there, or rather dancing there, he waved his hat madly round and round his head, and cheered in tones of

stentorian exultation. Some of his friends caught at him, and tried to draw or to drag him down; but for the time his enthusiasm was irrepressible, and he had to be allowed to roar himself hoarse. When comparative silence had been restored, Mr. Gladstone rose and announced that in consequence of the division that had just been taken the Ministry would have to consider their position—everybody understood the meaning of the momentous words—and he therefore moved that the House 'do now adjourn.' The next day he informed the House that he had placed his resignation in the hands of the Queen, that it had been accepted by her Majesty, and that Lord Salisbury had been summoned to Balmoral.

There came then a curious interval of uncertainty. Would Lord Salisbury and his colleagues really undertake the responsibility of office at such a time? Many of the Conservatives were strongly opposed to the idea of their leaders consenting to come into power under such troublous and precarious conditions. The times themselves were very much out of joint; but it was not merely because of the difficulties in home and foreign affairs that so many Tories predicted with confidence that Lord Salisbury would never consent to take the burden of office on his shoulders. There was Egypt to consider, there was Russia to consider, there was the question of Afghanistan, there was the assumed deficit in the revenue, there was Ireland—but also there was the Fourth party to be reckoned with. It would be wholly impossible for Lord Salisbury to think of going on

without the co-operation of Lord Randolph Churchill and his little band. Lord Randolph Churchill had of late been making himself immensely popular with the country. No Tory orator could compete with him for a moment in the hold which he had upon a Tory crowd. Lord Randolph really was not a Tory, was not even a Conservative, in the old-fashioned meaning of the word. He had genuine ideas of his own, and he also inherited Lord Beaconsfield's notion about the formation of a Tory democratic party. He was enthusiastic in the belief that by a fresh, energetic, and onward policy the working classes of Great Britain could be brought to see in a Tory democratic party their best friend and their Heaven-sent leader. Lord Randolph had not had opportunity enough to learn whether that idea could be realised, or whether it was capable of realisation; but for the time he was filled with it, and it inspired him and made him a power in politics. He had no ingrained prejudices as regards public policy. It was even understood that he was not an advocate of continued coercion in Ireland. Then, again, it was quite well known—Lord Randolph never attempted to conceal his feelings on the subject—that he wanted new men brought to the front, and that he wanted some of his elders to be pushed out of the way and in the direction of the House of Lords. He was accustomed to speak very contemptuously of 'the old gang,' as he despitefully described certain 'grave and reverend signiors' of the front Opposition bench. Two of these most respectable and dignified

gentlemen he was heard to nickname Marshall and Snelgrove, in allusion to a well-known and old-established London firm. The question, therefore, with many Tories was: Can we get on with Lord Randolph Churchill? It was quite certain that they could not get on without him; but, men asked themselves, What is the good of forming a Tory Administration if it is to go to pieces on some subject of internal dispute the very moment after it has been formed? Some days passed on, and left the country still in suspense, while many Tories went about confidently assuring their friends, and their opponents as well, that Lord Salisbury never would consent to take office under such conditions. These gentlemen, however, were mistaken. Lord Salisbury made up his mind to form a Government, and it soon became clear to everyone that he had allowed Lord Randolph Churchill to have pretty much his own way in the construction of the new Cabinet. Sir Stafford Northcote was to be banished to the Upper House with the almost meaningless office of First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Salisbury becoming Prime Minister and Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Lord Randolph Churchill was appointed Secretary for India, and Lord Carnarvon became Viceroy of Ireland. This latter appointment was in itself an ample guarantee that the Tories did not mean to go on with a coercion policy for Ireland. Sir Richard Cross became Home Secretary, an office he had held before. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons.

Sir William Hart Dyke accepted the position of Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. Sir William Hart Dyke was a somewhat colourless figure as regarded Irish politics, but he was recognised by everybody as a fair-minded man and a capable administrator, and it was quite understood that this time the Lord Lieutenant, and not the Chief Secretary, was to conduct the Irish policy. There had been a good deal of negotiation in the meantime because of a promise which Lord Salisbury wished to obtain from the leaders of the Liberal party, to the effect that the Liberals would support the new Government in the measures which would be absolutely necessary to bring the session to a satisfactory close. Mr. Gladstone would only say that in the conduct of the necessary business of the country during the remainder of the session he 'believed there would be no disposition to embarrass the Government serving her Majesty.' All this attempt at interchange of ideas and of promises may now be put aside as of no historical importance. The result of the whole business was that on June 24 Mr. Gladstone and his Liberal colleagues went out of office, and Lord Salisbury and his friends formed a Tory Government. Lord Salisbury, we may presume, did not count on being very long in office. The Liberals were still in a majority in the House of Commons, and as before almost everything depended on the action of the Irish National party. The Irish National party was undoubtedly for the moment inclined to believe that a new era for Ireland was opening up with the Viceroyalty of Lord

Carnarvon. The vote on Mr. Childers's budget, which had been accepted as decisive by Mr. Gladstone, was, after all, only what is called in the House of Commons a 'snap-vote.' The new Government must have felt, therefore, very insecure. Their trump card was perhaps Lord Carnarvon. Lord Carnarvon was supposed to have a policy for Ireland. But the Tory Government was not allowed by events any chance of playing its trump card.

Parliament adjourned for a few days, in order to allow the members of the House of Commons who had just accepted office time to present themselves to their constituents for re-election. The Houses reassembled on July 6. In the House of Lords the new Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, made a long statement as to the plans and purposes of the Government for the remainder of the session. The statement was very unpretentious, clear, and reasonable. The new Government was prepared to carry out the foreign policy of its predecessors as regards Russia and the Afghan frontier, and in all matters where the Liberal Government, 'as a Government,' had entered into any pledges or undertaken any responsibilities with foreign States. As regards domestic affairs, the new Administration wished to wind up the business of the session as soon as possible, and would therefore bring forward no unnecessary measures of legislation. Lord Carnarvon announced that the Government did not intend to ask for a renewal of the Irish Coercion Act, and had made up its mind to try to govern the island under the ordinary laws. A

few days later the Chancellor of the Exchequer made his financial statement. He explained that the Government had decided to adopt Mr. Childers's scheme, except for the proposals which the House itself had actually rejected. The House had refused to accept Mr. Childers's proposed increase in the succession duty and the proposed increase in the duties on spirits and beer. These propositions, therefore, the new Government, not unreasonably, refused to accept; but otherwise the Conservative ministers were prepared to go on the financial lines laid down by Mr. Childers. In fact the Government had nothing for it but to make the best it could of the short time left in its hands to get through, somehow or other, the business of the session. On August 6, Lord Randolph Churchill, as Secretary for India, made his first statement upon Indian finance. The statement at all events showed that Lord Randolph possessed a faculty which the House of Commons had not given him credit for up to that time—an extraordinary mastery of figures, and of financial business generally. Nothing of much account happened during the remainder of the session, and Parliament was prorogued by Commission on August 14, with the understanding that an appeal to the country was to be made between the close of one session and the opening of the next.

Just before the session came to an end two men died who had been for a long time well known in Parliament and in society. The first to die was Sir Charles Wood, latterly known as Lord Halifax.

He was eighty-five years old when he died. He had held all sorts of offices when in the House of Commons, and the result of his long career was that everybody wondered why he had chosen to revive in his own person the title of Lord Halifax, once borne by the brilliant and highly cultured leader of the 'Trimmers.' 'Who has tied Dolabella to that sword?' was the question put by one caustic and satirical political writer, Mr. Frank H. Hill, adapting to his purpose the words ascribed to Cicero. It was of Sir Charles Wood that John Bright once said his speech contained some good things; it would be impossible for any man to speak for three hours without saying some good things. The other death was that of Lord Houghton, for many years well known in society and in literature as Richard Monckton Milnes. Lord Houghton had been in the House of Commons for more than a quarter of a century, and was raised to the peerage in 1863, while Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister. Lord Houghton was the biographer of Keats, the friend of Heine, and the kindly friend and patron of every rising man in literature during his time. He wrote charming verses and delightful essays. He could make a fascinating speech on any ceremonial occasion, and he impressed those who knew him well with the belief that he had greater faculties in him than those which he had ever brought out, either in literature or in politics. Perhaps there was too much of the amateur about him in all pursuits. He enjoyed life thoroughly after his own fashion. He

loved society, he loved literature, and it pleased him now and then to dip into politics. Some of us thought that he would have been exactly in his place in the court of the Grand Duke Karl August, at Weimar, during what we may call the reign of Goethe. As it was he enjoyed himself thoroughly in London life. He knew everybody who was worth knowing. By a sort of law of social gravitation men and women of ability and intellect from all countries were drawn towards him. He has left little behind him but a memory, yet that memory in itself is a graceful wreath upon his tomb.

Lord Randolph Churchill's tenure of the office of Secretary for India was made historical by at least one successful enterprise which was thoroughly characteristic of him in its nature. That was the annexation of that part of Burma which had remained up to his time under the rule of the Burmese sovereign. The English Government and the Indian Government had had unspeakable trouble with the then ruler of the unannexed parts of the country. King Theebaw was really, we suppose, a madman, like many of the Ottoman sovereigns, or like Caligula and some others of the Roman emperors. He was a man, as the old Scotch proverb would put it, 'Neither to haud nor to bind.' Lord Randolph Churchill saw with a quick eye that something must be done, and we can easily imagine that it gave to his eager and daring temperament a satisfactory opportunity of showing that he was the man who could do it. Sir Algernon West, from

whose article in the *Nineteenth Century* of October 1896 we shall have to quote again, says that the annexation of Burma was a policy for which Lord Randolph alone was responsible. 'The conquest of the country was effected with remarkable rapidity. In November 1885, Lord Randolph gave the order to advance; on December 1 Lord Dufferin announced that the conquest was completed; and on the 31st of the same month Lord Randolph sent out his despatch detailing what had happened, and authorising the annexation.' The writer of this book has very little sympathy indeed with the general policy of annexation and aggression. But it must be owned that Lord Randolph Churchill had a far better excuse and something much more nearly approaching to a justification for his onward policy than many other of the makers of our Eastern empire could fairly claim. Lord Randolph, indeed, in those days had, with all his audacious spirit, a very cool head and a firm grasp of realities. Sir Algernon West also mentions the fact that a very important piece of work, 'the formation of the Indian Midland Railway, which has now a length of line of 700 miles and a capital of seven millions, was carried out by Lord Randolph against very considerable opposition.' We cannot help thinking that Lord Randolph Churchill must have found himself very much in his element just then, and must have been very happy. He delighted in doing something, and it must have been like a source of new life to him to be in a position where he could see his way to take all the responsi-

bility for some forward movement. It is only fair to say of one whose political career was so prematurely blighted, that he had in him that special characteristic of statesmanship which enables a man to make up his mind as to a course of action, to accept the whole responsibility for its consequences, and then, without racking trouble of mind, to await the results. There can be little doubt that if time and chance had favoured him he might have become one of the great 'English worthies' whose lives have been written, and have become classical. During the short time he held the office of Secretary of State for India political friends and political opponents were alike glad to bear testimony to the fact that his occupation of office showed him growing every day in seriousness, in breadth of view, and in the sense of responsibility. He held the office, as will be seen, but for a very short time. That Irish national question, with which he had dallied a good deal during the days when he led his three followers, turned against him in the end.

CHAPTER X.

HOME RULE.

PARLIAMENT was prorogued by Commission on August 14, in order that an appeal might be made to the country and a new House of Commons returned. It so happened that on the same day the existence of the Crimes Act for Ireland came to an end. The country was soon plunged into the excitement of a general election. Mr. Gladstone issued a manifesto in the form of an address to the electors of Midlothian. He asked for a renewal of the trust which Midlothian had given to him, and he declared that he looked forward with cheerfulness to the result of the election. Two great home questions, he said, were impending—the question of disestablishment, and that of the government of Ireland. With regard to disestablishment, the tenor of his address made it clear enough that the subject had not, according to his judgment, yet come within the range of practical politics. So vast a question, he said, 'cannot become practical until it shall have grown familiar to the public mind by thorough discussion, with the further condition that the proposal, when thoroughly discussed, shall be approved.' The

address spoke at greater length on the Irish question. One passage deserves to be quoted because of the light, not quite seen at the time, which it threw on the course of Mr. Gladstone's future policy. 'To maintain the supremacy of the Crown,' he said, 'the unity of the Empire, and all the authority of Parliament necessary for the conservation of that unity, is the first duty of every representative of the people. Subject to this governing principle, every grant to portions of the country of enlarged powers for the management of their own affairs is, in my view, not a source of danger, but a means of averting it, and is in the nature of a new guarantee for increased cohesion, happiness, and strength.' Then Mr. Gladstone closed this passage of his address with the emphatic words: 'History will consign to disgrace the name of every man who, having it in his power, does not aid, or prevents or retards an equitable settlement between Ireland and Great Britain.' Mr. John Morley shortly after, when addressing a meeting of the Newport Liberal Association, declared that the present was the most serious crisis in the relations between Great Britain and Ireland since 1829, and he expressed his confident hope that Mr. Gladstone would complete his work by giving Ireland a system of government which would meet her highest claims.

Later on Mr. Gladstone made a speech at a meeting in Edinburgh, in which he laid it down as a condition that the important political questions relating to Ireland—which would in all probability

arise at the very beginning of the first session of the new Parliament—could not be adequately dealt with unless the majority returned at the approaching elections were so powerful as to be able to act independently of the Irish vote. This part of the speech seems to have been misunderstood by most of the Irish National party. It was taken to be an appeal to what may be called the prejudices of many people in England, Scotland, and Wales. Let it be remembered that at this time rumours were spread abroad that Lord Salisbury and Lord Carnarvon were endeavouring to have what may be called in colloquial language 'a deal' with the leaders of the Irish National party. It has since been made absolutely certain that Lord Carnarvon, for himself, was quite willing to give Home Rule to Ireland, provided it did not involve any danger of actual separation, or even any formal repeal of the Act of Union. What Lord Salisbury's views may have been, and how far he was in accordance with Lord Carnarvon, has never been made quite certain. But the common belief assuredly was that some understanding with Mr. Parnell was sought by the leaders of the Tory party. Therefore, when Mr. Gladstone asked for a majority to enable him to act independently of the Irish Nationalist members, the impression went abroad among Irishmen everywhere that the appeal was made to Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Welshmen to enable him to deal as a majority might think fit with the demands of Mr. Parnell and of Ireland. The Irish National League of Great Britain issued an

address to all Irishmen in England, calling on them to vote for the Tories against the Liberals, and denouncing the Liberal party in the strongest terms as the enemies of the Irish national cause and of the Irish people. The address was, if we remember rightly, signed with Mr. Parnell's name, in his capacity as president of the association; but its style was far too impassioned to suit Mr. Parnell's clear, cold method of reasoning, and, as a matter of fact, we believe that it was issued on the spur of the moment, and without giving time for any consultation with Mr. Parnell. Mr. Gladstone alluded to the manifesto in another Edinburgh speech, and complained that Mr. Parnell should advise his countrymen to abandon the Liberals, who, if their conduct towards Ireland had not been always free from reproach, had at least initiated whatever reforms had been granted to Ireland, and should urge them to join the Tories, who had always offered unflinching and even desperate opposition to any such reform. Therefore, so far as public conjecture could arrive at any conclusion, the Irish Nationalist party had now broken thoroughly away from the Liberals, and were determined to support Lord Salisbury. It is well to take account of that impression, because it will help to explain the reason for the great surprise which possessed most people when, later on in the year, Mr. Gladstone made his declaration of policy with regard to Ireland.

Mr. Gladstone was elected for Midlothian by an immense and overwhelming majority, polling more than twice the votes given to his Conservative opponent.

About the middle of December the final results of the elections began to be known. The position of the three parties in the House of Commons stood thus: the Liberals returned 334 members, the Conservatives had 250, and the Irish Nationalists 86. Therefore it was clear that if the Irish Nationalists joined the Liberals, the Liberals would have a very large majority; and if the Irish Nationalists, on the other hand, decided to support the Tories, the Tories might on a critical occasion have a very narrow majority of some two or three votes. The published results of the elections did not by any means set men's minds quite at rest. If the manifesto issued by the Irish National League of Great Britain really expressed the determined policy of the Irish people, then, of course, the Liberal party would be reduced to helplessness in the new Parliament. But somehow there was a very general impression spreading abroad that the manifesto was not likely to be followed out to the extreme. Mr. Parnell had made two or three speeches in England during the course of the elections which were pitched in a very moderate tone, and gave little countenance to the idea that a policy of war to the knife against the Liberal party had been actually resolved on by Irish Nationalists. In the meantime the country was distracted by the continued reports about this alliance and that alliance, and the more prevailing opinion still continued to be that Lord Salisbury was negotiating for some more or less defined combination with the Nationalists, and had all but succeeded in obtaining the promise of their

support. It will be seen very soon that the troubles of the Liberal Government, which was certain now to be formed, were to come, not from the English Tories, and not from the Irish Nationalists, but from members of the Liberal party itself.

While the elections were still going on a good and, in a certain sense, a great Englishman passed quietly out of life. Lord Shaftesbury died at Folkestone, after a prolonged illness, at the age of eighty-four. Lord Shaftesbury's whole life had been associated with movements having for their object the physical and moral improvement of the lives of the working classes and the poor generally. If he could have had an enemy, that enemy would never have ventured to ascribe to Lord Shaftesbury any selfish or ambitious personal motive in the career which he had chosen. When in the House of Commons, as Lord Ashley, he had put himself at the head of every movement which strove to brighten the lives and lighten the burdens of the poor. We have already told in the early part of this History how Lord Ashley obtained the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the whole subject of the employment of women and girls in mines and collieries. The appointment of that Commission disclosed so many hideous evils that it ended in the passing of an Act of Parliament absolutely prohibiting the employment of women and girls underground in mines and collieries. He then endeavoured to obtain a ten hours' limitation for the daily labour of women and children in factories. His attempt was not quite successful, but it led in the end

to the Factories Act of 1844. The legislation set on foot by Lord Shaftesbury was opposed by many high-minded and philanthropic Englishmen, on the ground that it pushed too far the principle of State interference in the regulation of labour and of private contract. At that time it was one of the favourite doctrines of what was then called the Manchester school, that the Legislature had no right to interfere between employers and employed—on the ground, however, that State interference could never make things better, and was only too likely to make things much worse. It would be doing great injustice to the principles of the Manchester school if we were to assume for a moment that the object was to maintain an ascendency of the employers over the employed. No thought of the kind could ever have entered into the mind of a man like Mr. Cobden, or a man like Mr. Bright. The sincere conviction of the leaders of the Manchester school was that Government could not, with any good effect, undertake to interfere in the regulation of labour. There were reformers of that school who carried their principles so far as to advocate the management of the whole Post Office system by private contract, open to competition, and who contended that owners of hackney carriages and cabs of all kinds should be allowed to charge as much by the mile as they thought fit, provided only that they exhibited the list of their prices within the sight of the perhaps belated fare. Since that time the doctrines of the Manchester school have fallen almost into forgetfulness; and it was undoubtedly Lord

Shaftesbury who led the great fight which for the present, at all events, has set up the authority of the State as regards the regulation of labour, and even of private contract. Lord Shaftesbury was in some ways a narrow-minded man, and, like all with whom a strong sentimental tone prevails, he was occasionally led into error, and made himself the butt of some ridicule. He did not much care about the ridicule, and probably seldom saw the point of the joke. He must have been almost ideally happy in his life, for he was always striving to do good for the weak and for the lowly, and for the most part he was successful in his attempts.

In the December of 1885 the country was a good deal stirred by mysterious rumours which began to get about in clubs, and find their way into newspapers, to the effect that Mr. Gladstone had made up his mind to adopt the principle of Home Rule, and that if he should come back into office he would bring in a measure to give Ireland national self-government. These reports were promptly denied. They were denied by more than one former colleague of Mr. Gladstone; but it was noticed at the time that no contradiction came from Mr. Gladstone himself. To some observers of political affairs, the fact of Mr. Gladstone's having published no denial was all but conclusive that the rumours were true. Some members of Parliament, at all events, found nothing incredible in the report, even in its earliest and crudest form. Mr. Gladstone had been meditating over the Home Rule question for many years. It

had been brought under his notice by events and by politicians; and Mr. Gladstone's order of mind was not that which could deal with unwelcome subjects as Dickens's Mr. Podsnap did, by simply putting them behind him, and so clean away. Mr. Gladstone's mind was eminently open to receive new impressions. Like the hero in the 'Arabian Nights,' when he saw a gleam of light anywhere, he endeavoured to track it to its source.

Five years at least before the time at which we have now arrived Mr. Gladstone had been studying the question of Home Rule for Ireland. He had suggested to a friend that it might be well to write an article or two in one of the great London reviews, putting the case for Home Rule fairly before the English public. He did not then profess himself in favour of Home Rule. His mind was far from being made up on the subject. But he thought the question was of importance enough to entitle it to be brought up for the quiet consideration of the English reading public. Mr. Gladstone had at the moment two great difficulties in his mind; difficulties which any imperial statesman was bound to consider. In the first place, he was not certain whether a scheme of Home Rule could be shaped which, while giving Ireland the management of her own affairs, could yet secure the supreme and final control of the Imperial Parliament. The second difficulty was, that he had no clear evidence before him as to the desire of the great majority of the Irish people for a measure of Home Rule. Mr. Gladstone's

second difficulty was easy to understand. We have already mentioned the fact that the Irish representation was, until the passing of Mr. Gladstone's Reform measures of 1834 and 1885, left almost altogether in the hands of the landlord class and the wealthy trading class. The most ardent advocate of Home Rule could not have denied, before the passing of those measures, that the majority of the Irish representatives in the House of Commons were either directly opposed to Home Rule, or were cold and lukewarm supporters of the principle. After the new Reform Bill of 1884 there was a remarkable change in the condition of things so far as Ireland was concerned. A popular suffrage had been established in Ireland, with the result that the genuine Home Rule party came back to Parliament eighty-two strong, out of a whole national representation of 103. The Tory members, the Orangemen of the North, and others, retained their seats for the most part, but the nominal Home Rulers, as Mr. Gladstone had called them, absolutely disappeared from Parliamentary life. Such a fact as this could not but make a profound impression on the mind of a man like Mr. Gladstone. It became clear to him that the vast majority of the Irish people had set their hearts on a policy of Home Rule. One of his difficulties was, therefore, gone altogether.

When, in 1874, after the general election which resulted in the defeat of himself and his party, Mr. Gladstone spoke on Mr. Butt's Home Rule motion in the House of Commons, he opposed Mr. Butt's motion

on the ground that neither England nor Ireland had made up its mind as to the principle of Home Rule; but he took care to add that, if the principle were once recognised, he could not think much of the statesmanship which was not able to construct a plan adequate to such a purpose. One can, of course, only follow by mere conjecture the working of a great statesman's mind on any subject, but it seems to us that in this case conjecture is safe enough. We have the fact, which was plain to Mr. Gladstone's observation, that Ireland, at least, was by its vast majority resolute for Home Rule, and we have then Mr. Gladstone's own declaration, that he could not think much of any statesmanship incapable under such conditions of framing a Home Rule measure.

It was no surprise, therefore, to some political observers when the rumours began to float about that Mr. Gladstone had become a convert to the principle of Home Rule for Ireland. It appears to be certain that he did not for some time take the whole of his leading colleagues into his confidence. Some of them he did consult—among others, Mr. John Morley, who was afterwards the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant under Mr. Gladstone's Government. However that may be, it very soon became known to the world that time and events had effected the great conversion, and that the conduct of Home Rule had passed from the hands of Mr. Butt and of Mr. Parnell into those of the greatest living English statesman. Soon also it became apparent that this onward movement of reform was

not to be accomplished without the disadvantage which has attended every movement of reform made by an English Liberal statesman—the falling-off or the revolt of a certain number of his followers who did not see their way to acknowledging his guidance any more. This was what happened when Mr. Gladstone brought in his Reform Bill in 1866: his efforts were paralysed for the time by the fact that some of his ablest colleagues turned away from him, or were led into revolt against him. Even while Mr. Gladstone was actually forming his new Government in the February of 1886, people talked freely about this man or that man who was sure not to hold office if Mr. Gladstone persevered with a scheme of Irish Home Rule. Lord Hartington, it was said by everybody who professed to know, could never be got to adopt such a policy; and after a while it began to be confidently affirmed that Mr. Chamberlain, too, would in such a case revolt against his leader. No one was surprised about Lord Hartington. He had never been enthusiastic for reforms of any kind in Ireland, and, indeed, was not given to be enthusiastic about anything. But many persons were still in doubt as to Mr. Chamberlain. He had always been, as everyone could see, the close associate of Home Rulers in the House of Commons for many years. The Home Rulers had given him their confidence, as they had given it to Sir Charles Dilke, and there was not the slightest reason to suppose that Sir Charles Dilke had changed his opinions or his attitude in regard to Home Rule. Therefore when the Government was

still in process of formation the public in general was expecting to hear something serious about Lord Hartington; but the outer world was still incredulous as to the possibility of Mr. Chamberlain's refusing to join the Administration. The air was thick with all manner of reports, assertions and contradictions, and to the observer who was not too deeply concerned in the realities of the crisis the whole state of things was one of curious interest.

The new Parliament was opened by the Queen in person on January 21, 1886. The speech read by the Lord Chancellor made allusion to the agitation going on in Ireland against the Act of Union, and declared that if the existing provisions of the law should prove inadequate to cope with the growing evils of organised intimidation, Parliament would be asked to grant further powers to the Administration. It may be noticed in connection with this announcement that Lord Carnarvon had quite lately resigned his office as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. A correspondence on the subject had taken place between Lord Carnarvon and Lord Salisbury. Lord Carnarvon, in allusion to rumours which had been going about as to the reasons for his resignation, invited Lord Salisbury to say whether it was not a fact that Lord Carnarvon had accepted office only as a provisional and a temporary arrangement, and whether he had not made it distinctly understood that his occupation of the office was to cease with the opening of the new Parliament. Lord Salisbury, of course, confirmed these statements, and spoke in the highest

terms of the satisfaction which Lord Carnarvon's conduct as Lord Lieutenant had given to all his colleagues in the Administration. So that was all right. There can be no doubt that Lord Carnarvon did make the stipulation as to the limited time of his Viceroyalty; but there can be no doubt also that Lord Carnarvon had set his heart on giving to Ireland a measure of national self-government such as the Irish people could accept, and that for one reason or another he was not able to carry all his colleagues with him. There can be no doubt that he sought an interview with Mr. Parnell, and that Mr. Parnell and he seemed to have found a satisfactory basis of arrangement. Short as the time of his Viceroyalty was, Lord Carnarvon succeeded in making a most favourable impression on the people of Ireland. To begin with, he went about without any armed escort whatever. Some of his predecessors never passed through the streets of Dublin without a squad of cavalry to take care of them, a futile defence against some determined assassin firing with a rifle from a garret window. Lord Carnarvon walked about the streets of Dublin with his wife just as any ordinary couple might do; they went into shops and bought things, looked into shop-windows, talked freely with everybody who came in their way, and were never molested by anybody. Lord Carnarvon had deliberately made up his mind before going to Ireland that he would go there as a free man, if one may use that expression, and would have no cluster of dragoons to protect his movements. When the

passage in the Royal Speech to which we have referred became known, it was impossible for the public in general not to feel convinced that there had been a difference of opinion between Lord Carnarvon and the majority of his colleagues on the subject of Home Rule for Ireland. He would, no doubt, have gone out of office about that time in any case. But if his ideas had been accepted by the Cabinet, no paragraph could have appeared in the Royal Speech to announce that any further attempts to disturb the Act of Union would be answered by coercive legislation.

The debate on the address was of the nature of a mere ceremonial. Everybody knew that Lord Salisbury's Government was doomed to go out of office, and it did not matter much from what hand came the *coup de grâce*. As a matter of fact, it came from the hand of Mr. Jesse Collings, at that time a strong Radical and Home Ruler. Mr. Collings proposed an amendment to the address expressing regret that no measure had been announced by the Government for the relief of agriculture, and especially for affording facilities to agricultural labourers to obtain allotments and small holdings on equitable terms as to rent and fixity of tenure. This was, in fact, what was afterwards known as the 'Three-acres-and-a-cow' amendment.

The amendment was warmly supported by Mr. Gladstone, by Mr. Joseph Arch, and by Mr. Chamberlain. Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen strongly opposed it. The amendment was carried by 329 votes

against 250, and Lord Salisbury's Government immediately went out of office. On February 1 Lord Salisbury announced in the House of Lords the resignation of himself and his colleagues, and added that Mr. Gladstone had undertaken the task of forming a Government. Presently it became known that Mr. Gladstone was to be Prime Minister, and Sir William Harcourt Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Childers was to be Home Secretary; Lord Rosebery, Secretary for Foreign Affairs; Lord Granville, Secretary for the Colonies; Lord Kimberley, Secretary for India, and, as everyone had expected, Mr. John Morley to be Chief Secretary to the new Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Aberdeen. To the surprise of many persons, Mr. Chamberlain came into the Government as President of the Board of Trade. The name of Lord Hartington did not appear in the published list of members of the Administration. It soon became known that Lord Hartington had positively declined to take office under Mr. Gladstone, on the ground that he could not accept Mr. Gladstone's policy with regard to a measure of Home Rule for Ireland. The general expectation more lately had been that Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain would go hand in hand, whether to enter office or to back out of it. The line of cleavage had already shown itself. The question was, how much farther was it likely to stretch.

One other name was missed from the list of the new Ministry. It was that of Sir Henry James, who had been Attorney-General under Mr. Gladstone in

the Government which came to an end in 1885. Sir Henry James was not credited by many of his colleagues or friends with any very profound seriousness of conviction on political subjects. He was considered by everybody a very rising man in the House of Commons. At the Bar he was a most brilliant advocate, and in the House he was one of the best debaters among those who did not claim to be great orators. A splendid career seemed to be before him. The exalted position of Lord Chancellor appeared to be waiting for him to come and take it when a Liberal Government should again enter into office. Everyone who knew him liked him, but people generally regarded him as a man delighted with his own career at the Bar and in Parliament, and not in the least likely to allow his convictions on mere political subjects to stand in the way of his personal advancement. Yet it is certain that Sir Henry James refused to take office under Mr. Gladstone, when Mr. Gladstone made it known that he was about to bring in a measure to give a separate Parliament to Ireland. Even those who most deeply regretted Sir Henry James's unconquerable objection to the policy of Home Rule could not but admit that he had made a sacrifice of his own immediate personal interests when he declined to serve in Mr. Gladstone's Administration. Those who knew him always believed him to be an ambitious man, and here, at a great turning-point in his career, he had renounced the immediate object of his ambition. Only a very unqualified partisan of Mr. Gladstone's policy could

refuse to give to Sir Henry James some tribute of admiration for his sincerity and for his resolve. It must be remembered, too, that although he had some friends among the Irish Nationalist party, he had never identified himself with them or with their cause, as Mr. Chamberlain at one time had done. Emerson once said of Wendell Phillips, who, although a man fond of social intercourse, refused to go to any dinner-party where wine was drunk, 'Let us at least give him the credit of his hair-shirt.' The same sort of credit ought to be given to Sir Henry James, for the hair-shirt which he put on when he deliberately renounced his immediate chances of advancement because he could not see his way to accept the policy of Home Rule.

Parliament reassembled on February 3, and writs were moved in the Commons for seats rendered vacant by members who had accepted office in the new Ministry. Mr. Gladstone issued an address to the electors of Midlothian, in which he touched upon the Irish difficulty, but was still somewhat vague with regard to the question of Home Rule. 'The hope and purpose of the new Government,' he said, 'in taking office was to examine carefully whether it is not practicable to try some method of meeting the present case of Ireland, and ministering to its wants, more safe and more effectual, going nearer to the source and seat of the mischief, and offering more promise of stability, than the method of separate and restrictive criminal legislation.' The House met again on February 18, and Mr. Gladstone stated that

the business of supply would have to be pushed on without delay, as it was absolutely necessary to introduce a Financial Bill by March 22. After that date, he said, he hoped to make a statement on the policy of the Government with regard to Ireland. Then he came nearer to the point than he had done before when he announced that the great desire of the Administration was to introduce measures of a positive and substantial character with respect to social order, the Land question, 'and the method of government' in Ireland. If there could possibly have been any doubt as to Mr. Gladstone's policy with regard to Home Rule, the words about the method of government in Ireland must have made it certain that some great organic change was in contemplation.

By a curious coincidence, just three days before the Home Rule measure came to be introduced Mr. William Edward Forster died in London. We have had many occasions already to speak of Mr. Forster, and to describe his public career. In private life he was a man against whom there was absolutely nothing to be said. His nature was pure, upright, unselfish and honourable. But somehow the gifts with which his fairy godmother had endowed him at his birth seemed to be blighted in political life by the spell which the evil-minded and hostile fairy had cast upon him. He had proved himself a genuine administrative statesman in his carrying through of the Education Bill of 1870, and when he became charged, as he was practically charged, with

the administration of Irish affairs, he went over to Dublin filled with the sincerest hope that he could do good to the country; and Ireland itself was filled with the sincerest faith that he had come to do her good. One who since his time had much to do with Irish administration maintained, half-humorously and more than half-seriously, that Mr. Forster's great misfortune in Irish government was that he had not read Thomas Davis's poem on eviction and Clarence Mangan's 'Dark Rosaleen.' The propounder of this theory insisted, with much justice, that no man ought to be sent over from England as Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant who had not thoroughly mastered the meaning of these two poems. No man who had not done so, it was contended, could understand the paralysing terror of eviction which haunted the mind of the Irish cottier tenant, or the passionate nationality which thrilled through the heart of the whole peasant population of Ireland. Mr. Matthew Arnold, Mr. Forster's brother-in-law, who had such a thorough appreciation of the Celtic mood and the Celtic genius, might have read and expounded to him Davis's eviction poem and Mangan's 'Dark Rosaleen.' But apparently no such exposition took place, and Mr. Forster failed to understand the country which he had been sent to govern. As has been said before, he became disappointed in the Irish people because they were disappointed in him, and the disappointment on both sides grew more and more acute with every day, until at last Mr. Forster seemed to have a positive dislike for the

Irish people, and to the Irish people he became almost as much an object of dislike as another Castlereagh. An Irish Nationalist member in the House of Commons, and one who was not given to rhetorical exaggeration of speech, once said of Mr. Forster, in paraphrase of certain famous words written about Lord Eldon, that it had seldom been the lot of any human being to have an opportunity of doing so much good as Mr. Forster had prevented in Ireland. Those who knew him, knew that he meant all for the best. Those who knew Ireland could have told him in advance—some of them did tell him in advance—that he was adopting a course of policy which could only make all for the worst. His death was the melancholy close of what might have been a really great career; all the more melancholy because the man's own gifts and merits deserved a much better end.

On April 8 Mr. Gladstone moved in the House of Commons for leave to introduce his bill to make provision for the better government of Ireland. Never in our time has there been so breathless an anxiety to listen to a ministerial statement. It was arranged that on that occasion the House of Commons should be opened for the admission of members as early as six o'clock in the morning. Many members, however, arrived as early as half-past five, and even five o'clock in the morning, and planted their backs to the doors in order to be able to rush in at the first moment when the doors were opened. A member who came down as late as seven o'clock in

the morning had not the faintest chance of a seat, unless he belonged to the Government or to the front bench of Opposition. The House was so crammed that chairs had to be placed across the floor from the bar to the table in front of the Speaker. Nothing of the kind had been seen before in the present reign, and it was said at the time that we should have to go back to Lord George Gordon's famous descent upon the House of Commons in order to get such another illustration of Parliamentary interest and excitement. When Mr. Gladstone entered the House from behind the Speaker's chair at half-past four o'clock, he was received by the most enthusiastic cheering from all the really Radical members in England, Scotland and Wales, and from all the Irish Nationalist members who followed the leadership of Mr. Parnell. The whole scene was one not to be forgotten by any of those who were fortunate enough to have a chance of looking at it. Mr. Gladstone began his speech amid a breathless silence. His speech lasted for nearly three hours and a half, and yet did not seem to any listener one sentence too long.

Mr. Gladstone's scheme proved to be somewhat more complicated than had been expected by the outer public. It had what may be described as two essential principles. The first was, that Ireland should have a Parliament of its own; and the second was, that Ireland should have no representation in the Imperial Parliament at Westminster. In point of fact, Grattan's Parliament was to be given back to Ireland,

without the narrow conditions as to suffrage, qualification and religion which ended in the Rebellion of 1798. As in Grattan's time, so according to Mr. Gladstone's scheme Ireland was to be unrepresented at Westminster. It was well known to those who came into the inner circle of politics that Mr. Parnell and his colleagues had, after some consideration, given their assent to this principle. The Irish Nationalist members would then have been willing to accept almost any scheme which was based upon an admission of Ireland's right to have her own National Parliament. More than that, it was the impression of many leading Irishmen in and out of Parliament that it would be well to let Irishmen manage their Irish affairs apart from all direct connection with Westminster. Many such Irishmen thought that it might be difficult to get the best intellect of Ireland into a Dublin Parliament, if the broader interests and the Imperial audience of Westminster Palace were still left to tempt young Irish ambitions. At all events, it was quite certain that the Irish Nationalist members were prepared to accept Mr. Gladstone's scheme, and would support the Government in endeavouring to carry it through.

It is hardly necessary now to go into all the details of the scheme. Some of these seemed from their very announcement to be doomed to failure. The Irish Parliament which Mr. Gladstone proposed to set up was to be composed of two orders, with power in either order to demand separate voting, and thus to put a veto on any proposal of

legislation until the next dissolution, or for at least an interval of three years. The first order was to consist of twenty-eight representative peers, and seventy-five other members elected for ten years by voters having a yearly qualification of 25*l.* and a property qualification of 200*l.* a year. The second order—in other words the House of Commons—was to consist of the 103 members already allowed by the Act of Union, with the addition of 101 elected for five years. Now it was obvious that this scheme involved principles which certain members of the House would find it impossible to accept. The Home Rule Bill, moreover, was to be accompanied or followed by a great measure for the buying out of the Irish landlords, a measure which Mr. Gladstone himself declared to be essential to the success of the Home Rule scheme. Then came up, too, the constitutional objections of many thoroughgoing English Scotch and Welsh Radicals to the policy of forming an Irish Parliament which was to have no representation at Westminster. Is not this, they asked. and with much show of reason, the setting up again of the principle of taxation without representation? Of course, the several colonial Parliaments are entirely distinct and apart from the Imperial Parliament. But then, the Imperial Parliament has nothing to do with the taxation of the Canadians or of the Australasians. The desire of many friends of Ireland and Great Britain was that the federal idea should be adopted, and that Ireland should hold the same relationship to England that a State of the American Union

holds to the entire federal system: that is, that the State manages its own local affairs, and is represented at Washington for the common business of the Republic. The interests of Ireland, it was pointed out, are indissolubly bound up with those of England, Scotland and Wales. There is a large Irish population in the three divisions of the greater island, and who, it was asked, is to speak up for its claims and its rights in the Imperial Parliament if no representatives of Ireland are allowed to have a seat at Westminster? Some of the leading men among the Roman Catholic clergy in Great Britain were naturally anxious to know who was to look after the religious interests of the Irish Roman Catholics in England, Scotland, and Wales, if Ireland was to have no voice in the Imperial Parliament. Many of the most sincere and convinced English, Welsh, and Scottish Radicals, men who were as friendly to the Irish national cause as the Irish themselves could be, declared against Mr. Gladstone's measure because it left Ireland to be taxed by the Imperial Parliament without having any representation at Westminster. Of course, there was a part of Mr. Gladstone's bill which proposed a general settlement of imperial charges. Ireland was to contribute one-fifteenth to the public expenditure instead of one-twelfth, which up to that time had been the proportion of contribution. Still, it is perfectly easy to imagine a state of things in which one-fifteenth might be too much to exact from Ireland as her contribution, and who was to say this in the English House of Commons? Mr.

George Trevelyan (now Sir George Trevelyan), one of the ablest and most highly cultured men in the Liberal party, resigned office for that reason. As we shall see later on, he came back to hold office under Mr. Gladstone's Government when the difficulty which oppressed so many sincere Radicals in Great Britain had been removed. Much fault was found, too, with the principle of two separate orders in the Irish Parliament, which was considered by many impartial observers to be fantastic, and probably unmanageable; and much fault, too, was found with the principle of property qualification.

Mr. Chamberlain had already, on March 27, announced his intention to withdraw from the Government. His ostensible reason for withdrawal was because of Mr. Gladstone's accompanying land scheme, even more than because of his Home Rule scheme, although he had by this time discovered that he was entirely opposed to the policy of Home Rule. Mr. Chamberlain had, in point of fact, constructed a scheme of his own for giving a certain measure of local self-government to Ireland; but the scheme had to be given up because of the one difficulty that it was found impossible to get the Irish people to accept it, or even to take the slightest interest in it. Mr. Chamberlain, although a man of great shrewdness and ability, had by this time utterly lost his hold on the central fact of the whole Irish crisis. Perhaps he was too much of a business man by training to take any account of national sentiment; and, at all events, it is certain that at this time he had

come to take no account whatever of the national sentiment of Ireland. What Ireland wanted, first of all, was a distinct recognition of her nationality, and Mr. Chamberlain proposed to settle things by giving her such a scheme of local government as every English county and city possessed. A more complete failure to understand the cardinal difficulty of the situation can hardly be imagined. Mr. Chamberlain's great weakness, indeed, when he had to deal with questions of magnitude, was that lack of imagination which left him unable to understand any feelings but those which had to do with practical business interests. The Irish people did not care in the least about Mr. Chamberlain's scheme. An Irish member, quoting from some words of Mr. Disraeli in former days, described the scheme as 'Popkin's plan.' Mr. Disraeli, discussing Sir Robert Peel's scheme for the repeal of the Corn Laws, said in the House of Commons that he had heard one of the followers of the Government declare that it was not really Peel's plan, but Popkin's plan, and Mr. Disraeli added, with sudden and theatric energy, 'I object to having this country convulsed because of Popkin's plan.' At all events, Mr. Chamberlain withdrew from the Liberal Government, and it began to be clear to most people that the Home Rule measure was not likely to pass even through the House of Commons.

In fact a new political party was constructed on the basis of opposition to the Home Rule Bill. A great meeting was held in what was then Her Majesty's Opera-house in London to uphold, as it was

put, the legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland. Lord Cowper, who had been an Irish Viceroy in Mr. Forster's day, presided over the meeting, and Lord Hartington and Lord Salisbury and Mr. Goschen were among the leading speakers. Some men who had always, up to that time, borne the repute of being downright Radicals appeared on the same platform and supported Lord Hartington and Lord Salisbury. One complaint very commonly made by the opponents of the scheme was that Mr. Gladstone had not given his colleagues of the Cabinet time enough to consider the whole question. Some of Mr. Gladstone's colleagues in the Cabinet, like Lord Spencer, for example, cordially accepted his policy, and stood by it to the end, for better or for worse. The truth is that many of Mr. Gladstone's colleagues had never been Radicals, or even Liberals in the real sense. Mr. Bright had pointed out years before, in a letter to a friend, when Mr. Goschen was taken into a Liberal Cabinet, that Mr. Goschen had never really been a Liberal in principles at all, and predicted that he would one day be found a leading member of a Tory Administration. The prediction, we need hardly say, was fulfilled in due course of time. The most damaging, however, of all the secessions from the Liberal party was the secession of Mr. Bright himself. Mr. Bright had during the whole of his public career taken the deepest interest in the condition of Ireland. During the passion of the Crimean War he was burnt in effigy by a Lancashire mob as the friend of Ireland and of Russia. No

reasonable human being in these islands now defends the policy then pursued towards Ireland, or the policy of the Crimean War. Mr. Bright had stood up manfully for every proposed reform in the land-tenure system of Ireland. He had again and again preached the great doctrine that force was no remedy for Irish discontent. It is true that he had never given himself out as one who favoured the idea of a separate Parliament for Ireland. He had, indeed, on more than one occasion expressly declared against the idea. But he had so often given it as his opinion that everything ought to be done for Ireland by the Imperial Parliament which an Irish Parliament could and would do, that he was taken in a certain sense as admitting the justice of Ireland's national claim, provided that the Imperial Parliament persistently refused to do her right. Mr. Bright's secession from Mr. Gladstone's policy had, therefore, a tremendous effect on public opinion. Up to that time, or until very lately, Mr. Bright had been as much in favour of governing Ireland according to Irish ideas as Fox himself was, and now, therefore, many Englishmen repudiated the claim for Home Rule on the ground that Mr. Bright had spoken out against it.

Mr. Bright later on explained his policy in a letter addressed to Mr. Caine, one of the seceding Radicals. 'The action,' he said, 'of our clubs and associations is rapidly engaged in making delegates of their members, and in insisting on their forgetting all principles if the interests of a party, or the leader

of a party, are supposed to be at stake.' 'What,' he asked, 'will be the value of party when its whole power is laid at the disposal of a leader from whose authority no appeal is allowed? At this moment it is notorious that scores of members of the House of Commons have voted with the Government who in private have condemned the Irish bills. Is it wise for a Liberal elector or constituency to prefer such a member, abject at the feet of a minister, to one who takes the course dictated by his conscience and his sense of honour?' Two days after Mr. Bright issued his address to the electors of the Central Division of Birmingham. In this address he refused to pledge himself to the principle of Home Rule, which, he said, had not been explained by its author or by its supporters; and he added that the experience of the past three months had not increased his confidence in the wisdom of the Government, or in their Irish policy. He repeated an opinion expressed by him in 1872—an opinion which, if we remember rightly, was contained in a letter addressed to an Irish National representative, since dead—that to have two legislative assemblies in the United Kingdom would be a source of intolerable mischief; and he declared that he could not trust the peace and the interests of Ireland to the Irish Parliamentary party, to whom the Government now proposed to make a general surrender. These particular utterances were not made known till after the fate of the bill had been decided in the House of Commons. But everybody in the House and out of it knew perfectly well that Mr. Bright had set himself absolutely

against Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule policy. The effect of Mr. Bright's attitude may be fairly described as disastrous to Mr. Gladstone's bill. The constituencies in general cared little or nothing about the opinions of the Duke of Argyll or Lord Selborne on such a subject. But the opposition of Mr. Bright carried with it a weight and influence which were recognised and felt all over the country. We have already commented on the fact that of late years Mr. Bright had shown a certain estrangement from the policy of the Irish National party. He strongly condemned the systematised obstruction and the impassioned language used by many members of the party. In years far back he had often complained that the Nationalists at that time in Parliament were not nearly Nationalist enough; but from 1880 onwards he complained of the Irish members because of their intemperate and aggressive nationality. Curiously enough, too, he sometimes complained in private conversation of the class of men who were often brought into Parliament as Irish representatives. Although himself of marked democratic principles, he still had the old-fashioned notion that the House of Commons is not a place for a poor man, or what is called a working man. However that may be, his influence was given steadily and strongly against the Home Rule policy of Mr. Gladstone, and he renounced the old-time friendship and the old-time alliance as energetically in his own way as Burke had renounced the friendship of Fox.

The Home Rule Bill was doomed. It dragged out its length of debate, and many powerful and

brilliant speeches were made on both sides. It is needless now to tell the old story in any detail. The Liberal secessionists held the fate of the bill in their hands, and it was understood that unless the Irish representatives were to be retained in Westminster it would be impossible for the measure to pass through its second reading. A curious change had come over a certain amount of public opinion since the early agitation of Mr. Butt. The great objection then to the Home Rule scheme was that it proposed to retain a certain Irish representation in Westminster. It was then constantly asked, how the people of Great Britain could put up with an Irish Parliament in Dublin, the members of which, having settled their domestic legislation at home, without any interference from Westminster, were then to come over to Westminster and make laws for England, Scotland and Wales. Mr. Butt had an ingenious scheme, by which Irish members were only to be allowed to vote in the Imperial Parliament on subjects which directly concerned the interests of Ireland as a part of the Empire. This scheme, however, seemed rather too ingenious to bear the touch of criticism, and it was keenly satirised by Mr. Robert Lowe in an animated speech which he delivered in the House of Commons. In 1886, nevertheless, the objections to Mr. Gladstone's bill were mainly founded on the fact that it proposed to withdraw the Irish representatives from the Imperial Parliament. That these objections were in a great many cases conceived in a spirit of absolute sincerity was made known later on, when so many

seceding Liberals came back to follow Mr. Gladstone devotedly as the author of a new scheme of Home Rule which was to maintain an Irish representation in the Imperial Parliament.

That, however, is anticipating events which will have to be taken in their due course as they come up. On June 7, 1886, the House of Commons came to vote on the motion for the second reading of the bill. The debate was wound up by a speech from Mr. Gladstone which friends and enemies alike admitted to be one of the most powerful, eloquent and impassioned speeches he had ever delivered. Then came the division, and there were found to be 313 votes for the second reading of the bill and 343 against it. The excitement was not so great as had been seen in the House of Commons on many a less momentous occasion. The plain reason for this was that everybody knew in advance what was going to happen. The moment that the decision of the majority of the seceding Liberals became known to the public, everyone knew that there was no possibility of carrying the second reading of the bill. Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues took the only course which was fairly open to them. They determined on immediate dissolution, an appeal to the country, and a general election. The general election was brought to an end about the middle of July, and the Conservatives and the Liberal Unionists returned numbered 393, and the Radicals and Home Rulers 275, leaving the Liberal Government in a minority of 118. The Cabinet at once determined to resign

office immediately, without waiting for any formal pronouncement by a vote in the House of Commons. This is a course which, as our readers will remember, had been taken by Mr. Disraeli when the country declared in favour of Mr. Gladstone's policy with regard to the Irish State Church. Mr. Gladstone followed the example later on, and now once more acted in accordance with it. It was a wise and reasonable policy, saved much public time, and avoided a futile Parliamentary debate.

CHAPTER XI.

WRECKS OF MANY KINDS.

The Conservatives of course came back into office. There was not much novelty in the composition of the Administration, except that Lord Randolph Churchill became Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach accepted the office of Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. The interest of the public centred itself chiefly on Lord Randolph Churchill. Everybody knew all about Lord Salisbury. No one for a moment supposed that he was likely to open up for himself, or for his party, any new career. The return to office of Mr. W. H. Smith was not accompanied by any thrilling expectations, even on the part of his closest friends. But the new position of Lord Randolph Churchill was looked upon by most people as an event full of expectation and of possibility. Lord Randolph had made a distinct success as Secretary of State for India, and people wondered what he would do when put in the very different position of Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had given the House of Commons and the public in general so many surprises, that fresh wonders were

now commonly expected from him. Therefore it is not too much to say that the eyes of the public were turned almost exclusively on him. As a matter of fact he did, indeed, give the public before long quite a new surprise; but then, it was a surprise of a kind for which nobody had been looking. This, too, was characteristic. Lord Randolph Churchill had tried many things, and succeeded in many things. But there was one thing he could not do. He could not be commonplace. The public little anticipated that his return to high office was but the opening of a tragedy.

On December 23, 1886, the outer public, and even a great part of those who were near the centre of political life, were much surprised by the announcement that Lord Randolph Churchill had resigned the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and had absolutely withdrawn from Lord Salisbury's Administration. Up to the very announcement of the fact the common impression had been that Lord Randolph was certain to make a distinct success as Chancellor of the Exchequer. No one before that time had given him credit for any mastery of financial affairs, just as up to 1880 no one had given him credit for political capacity of any kind. We have already seen how, during his short tenure of office as Secretary of State for India, he had developed a faculty for grasping the whole condition of Indian affairs which won the cordial admiration of old and experienced Indian officials. In the same way, the moment he became Chancellor of the Ex-

chequer he applied his whole mind to the business of the office, and he seemed for the time to have found the true scope of his genius in the administration of finance. Just at the moment when almost everyone supposed that he was about to open a new and a brilliant chapter of his life came the announcement that he had ceased to be Chancellor of the Exchequer, and had withdrawn from the Government. His way of making the announcement public was curious, and was quite characteristic. On the evening of December 22 he went down to Printing-House Square himself, and told the editor of the *Times* that he had sent in his resignation. He had before this written a letter to Lord Salisbury, in which he insisted on certain financial arrangements being carried out as the sole condition on which he could continue to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Salisbury would not yield, and thereupon Lord Randolph Churchill resigned his office, and went to Printing-House Square and gave in his announcement.

The general impression made on the public mind was that it was simply one of Lord Randolph's peculiar freaks. He was always doing something of the kind, people said, and no doubt it suddenly occurred to him, seeing how much was hoped from him as Chancellor of the Exchequer, that it would be quite a humorous stroke of policy to withdraw from the business without any word of notice. We have had occasion more than once in these volumes to show how difficult the public found it to take Lord

Randolph Churchill seriously; and, of course, one great part of the difficulty consisted in the fact that Lord Randolph so often deliberately refused to take himself seriously. In this instance, however, as in others, too, he had come to a serious resolve founded on the most serious convictions. When Lord Randolph Churchill, following Mr. Disraeli, endeavoured to create the part of the Tory Democrat, he was not play-acting. He had a strong conviction as to the possibilities of the work. He was filled with the idea that the Tory party could do more for the democracy and the working class than the Liberals and the Radicals had ever done. Thus, too, although one of the most careless and extravagant of men in his personal and private dealings, he had become convinced of the necessity for the closest economy in the matter of imperial expenditure. All unnecessary expense, all showy expense, all braggadocial expense, if we may use that term, he was for cutting down with relentless hand. The budget which he was preparing for the next sitting of Parliament will probably be made known to the world some day, but as yet we of the outer public know nothing of its details, or even of its central proposals. All that we do know is, that it was to be a budget of rigid economy, and of economy exercised in the interest of the working classes and the poor in general.

The Houses of Parliament were opened on January 22, 1887, and in the debate on the address in the House of Commons, Lord Randolph Churchill explained the reasons for his resignation of office.

He announced that he had the permission of the Sovereign to give his explanation to the House, and then he firmly declared that he resigned because he was unable to accept the estimates for the support of the army and the navy in the coming year. There were other subjects, too, he admitted, on which he was not quite able to agree with Lord Salisbury. But these, he said, were matters well capable of compromise and of arrangement. The financial subjects, however, were questions on which he could not give way. He had pledged himself to economy and to retrenchment of expenses, and he was satisfied from his recent experience in the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer that such a policy could well be carried out; and, believing and knowing that, he could not continue to hold his place in an Administration which had made no profession of any effective retrenchment in the expenditure of the services. Mr. W. H. Smith, who was now leader of the House, made but a poor reply to Lord Randolph's statement. The substance of his answer was, that if Lord Randolph Churchill could have pointed to any definite items of extravagant expenditure the Government would have been quite willing to give every attention to his advice. That is to say, we suppose, in plain words, that if Lord Randolph Churchill could have made it clear that the Government were paying twice as much for the building of an ironclad as any other European State was paying, the Government would have endeavoured to see that the overcharge was cut down. Or it might have been that Lord Randolph

considered some contractor for the clothing of the army did not give value enough for the money, and in that case the Government would have been willing to reason out the question with that contractor. But the House of Commons and the public in general knew perfectly well that this sort of difference of opinion was not that which caused the resignation of Lord Randolph Churchill. What Lord Randolph Churchill wanted was a genuine principle of retrenchment, which would have kept the country out of fantastic and costly enterprises, and out of 'bloated armaments' generally, and would have acknowledged in practice that the great strength of the Empire lay, after all, in the contentment of her domestic populations.

Sir Algernon West published, several years after, a very interesting article in the *Nineteenth Century* on 'Lord Randolph Churchill as an Official,' from which we have already made some quotations. From the very commencement of his career as Chancellor of the Exchequer,' Sir Algernon West says—and Sir Algernon West ought to know—'Lord Randolph began his struggles for economy, his love for which was sincere and earnest. He determined that as long as he was responsible for the finances of the country he would enforce it. It has often been the subject of discussion, whether a man who is careful in his domestic affairs, would naturally be an economist in public affairs, and *vice versâ*. No one would ever have accused Lord Randolph of being a careful or even a prudent man in the management of his private concerns; but his ruling idea as Chancellor of the Ex-

chequer was for economy.' 'In a letter he wrote to me shortly after his resignation,' Sir Algernon West adds, 'Lord Randolph said: "The budget scheme we had in contemplation will now be relegated to the catalogue of useless labour. The essential principle of any financial policy which I care to be identified with is zeal for thrift and economic reform. This was wanting, and the scaffolding was bound to come down." It was the extravagance of the spending departments that induced him to write that fatal letter, which could only bring about his absolute supremacy or his resignation. No new fancy it was that dictated it. In October 1886 he had said that unless there was an effort to reduce the expenditure it was impossible that he could remain at the Exchequer. Again he said, "If the decision of the Cabinet as to the amount of the estimates was against him, he should not remain in office." I recollect after his fall his appealing to me, and saying that I knew that his resignation was not the consequence of a moment's irritation, but was from his deliberate determination that in matters financial he would be supreme. This I was able fully to endorse.'

Lord Randolph Churchill, then, passed out of public life an honest and honourable martyr to his own strong convictions. The rest is silence, or something, at least, which calls for not much talk. Lord Randolph Churchill never again appeared to any effect in the life of the House of Commons. He travelled a great deal. He went to South Africa, and acted as correspondent to a London daily paper,

receiving, it is said, enormous sums of money for his contributions, and making the contributions, very likely, rather as relief to his own mind and as change of occupation than for the sake of the payments they brought in. He came back to London now and then fitfully. He spoke occasionally at public meetings, and he spoke sometimes in the House of Commons. But the shadow of an early death was too evidently on him. He had never been in really robust health, and his way was always to put on himself more work than his frame could fairly bear. He suffered, it was believed, from some acute malady the pains of which could only be allayed at their worst by narcotics. As he had done everything recklessly, so he did too recklessly the travelling of his later years. Some of the speeches he made in his closing days of Parliamentary life sent a chill to the hearts of the listeners. He had lost almost all control over his voice and his articulation, and his words could hardly be understood. The rousing, rattling orator, who once could hold the House of Commons almost as closely as Gladstone or Disraeli could hold it, was now listened to with pathetic regret and with pain. We are, of course, anticipating the close of his career. He lived till January 24, 1895. But this volume is not a calendar of dates, and it would be unmeaning to carry on the story after its practical interest had come to a close. There were many greater men in the House of Commons in Randolph Churchill's own time, but there was none, perhaps, who had a career more unexpectedly

brilliant, more unexpectedly blighted. There were the elements in him of a great Parliamentary leader. He mounted, almost at one step, into prominence and into power. He dismounted, almost at one step, from prominence and from power. His was undoubtedly one of the most interesting figures of our political time, and it is only just to say that all who knew him, whether political friends or political foes, lamented over his Parliamentary fall and his premature death.

The first months of the new Ministry's existence were suddenly and sadly overclouded by the death of Lord Iddesleigh, who will always be better known in our modern political history as Sir Stafford Northcote. On January 12, 1887, Lord Iddesleigh left the Foreign Office, and went to make a call on Lord Salisbury at the Prime Minister's official residence in Downing Street. The attendants noticed that in going up the stairs Lord Iddesleigh seemed to be breathing hard and walking with difficulty. He reached the anteroom, and while the messenger was going to announce his name to Lord Salisbury, who was actually waiting to receive him, Lord Iddesleigh suddenly groaned deeply and sank into a chair. Everything was done that could be done under the conditions. Doctors were sent for; but about a quarter of an hour after his first faint Lord Iddesleigh was dead. He had, it seemed, for many years suffered from some ailment of the heart, which, although it did not necessarily threaten his life, yet made it possible that any sudden excitement, physical or mental, might have a fatal end.

The feeling of sorrow for Lord Iddesleigh was universal. There was, too, a kind of vague impression—founded for the most part, perhaps, on political gossip and the talk of clubs and smoking-rooms—that Lord Iddesleigh's services had not been adequately considered in the forming of the new Administration. It was well known beyond question that Lord Randolph Churchill, who was all-powerful when the Ministry came to be formed, was determined to have the process of what is called 'the infusion of new blood' applied to the Tory Government. Lord Randolph Churchill had made no concealment of the fact that while he admired Lord Iddesleigh personally, he did not think him equal to the task of leading the House of Commons. The only decent way of removing Sir Stafford Northcote from the leadership was to send him into the House of Lords, a process of 'levelling-up' which is, of course, distinctly understood by Parliament and by the public. It means: 'My good sir, your really active political work is done. You are not up to the mark any longer, even though you may have been at one time, and the best thing for you is to seek repose in the restful House of Lords.' Now, in the case of Mr. Disraeli the change of place brought no manner of humiliation with it. Disraeli had been for many years a most brilliant and successful leader of the House of Commons. The vigour of his mind, and even of his voice, was wholly unimpaired up to his last speech in the representative chamber; and it was quite natural that he should

seek for some lightening of the burden of work. Moreover, it was well known that from the earliest part of his career Mr. Disraeli had made up his mind to end his life in the House of Lords. But with Sir Stafford Northcote things were quite different. He had no ambition for the House of Lords, and yet he was not quite satisfied with his own career in the House of Commons. Therefore the change carried with it a distinct sense of failure. He was, indeed, entrusted with one of the most important offices an Englishman can possibly have—that of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Still there was a sense of humiliation, which perhaps some of his friends felt even more keenly than Lord Iddesleigh did himself. We all remember the story about Fox when, in one of his later fits of illness, it was intimated to him that the King, out of his great kindness, intended to confer a peerage on him. Fox lifted himself up in his bed, and clenched his hand, and said: 'Good God! He does not think it has come to that with me yet, does he?' Many of Sir Stafford Northcote's friends were made all the more angry because they saw in his transfer to the House of Lords an evidence of the ill-will of Lord Randolph Churchill. Now we confess that, for ourselves, we cannot see that there is any fault to be found with anyone who, being powerful in the forming of a new Administration, tries to get the very best men for the work. Sir Stafford Northcote was not, indeed, old in the sense in which we understand old age at this time of long-living statesmen. He was not quite

seventy years old when he died. But then, it must be owned that he had not been a great success as a leader of the House of Commons, or of the Conservative party in Opposition. We have made this admission already in this History, while professing at the same time a very cordial admiration for the character and the statesmanlike abilities of Sir Stafford Northcote. It was not all his fault that he did not make a greater success as a leader. He was not at any time, as it seems to us, quite appreciated by the House of Commons. His manner wanted strength, his voice wanted strength; and the cases are rare indeed in which a man without strength of voice or strength of manner has been a successful leader in that House. Perhaps also he was a little too conscientious for the place. We do not mean to cast the slightest doubt upon the conscientiousness of other men, but Sir Stafford Northcote's conscience was very sensitive, and when he found that he had made a mistake, he did not endeavour to brazen the matter out, but he owned to his mistake—'took it all back,' as the American phrase goes, and apologised for it. The House of Commons likes to be in the hands of a man who is, as Lord Holland said of Macaulay, cocksure about everything. Sir Stafford Northcote was not cocksure about anything.

For that reason, and for other reasons as well, his really great abilities were never quite appreciated by the House of Commons in general. Yet he was an admirable financier—had been trained in finance by Mr. Gladstone, whose private secretary he was for a

long time. He was a charming debater, though not of the more impressive and overbearing order, and he had a wide knowledge of affairs, domestic and foreign. He had borne himself throughout the difficult course of the negotiations in Washington arising out of the 'Alabama' claims with dignity and firmness, and made, with his colleagues, the best that could be made of a very bad case. In private life he won the respect, the admiration, and the affection of everyone who knew him. His nature was absolutely unselfish, his career was blameless. Political differences of opinion never interfered in the least degree with his private acquaintanceships and friendships. He was a man with many literary gifts, which, however, he had no time to turn to any advantage. His reading was broad and varied. His knowledge of classic and of English literature, while it made no pretensions to actual scholarship, was wide and deep. He had a great gift of humour, and was a delightful talker, while he never seemed to be talking for talking's sake, or with any idea of showing off his cleverness. He was intense in his admiration for the great dramatists of the Elizabethan age, and he had been heard to say that he had only one serious difference of opinion with Disraeli, and that was because Disraeli could not take any delight in the comedies of Ben Jonson. Some of Sir Stafford Northcote's speeches in the House of Commons were very rich in happy and unexpected citations and illustrations from Walter Scott and some of the great English writers of fiction. His death unquestionably

left English public life the darker for the time. His was a very curious position, which even a much greater man might not have filled to such advantage. He had to a remarkable degree the gift of conciliation. People could approach him easily. He was willing to listen to a suggestion from anyone, and men of different political parties in the House of Commons felt sure that if they attempted to approach him they would not be put aside by a jest as in Lord Palmerston's case, or by a blank and silent stare as in the case of Mr. Disraeli. His mourners, therefore, 'were two hosts—his friends and foes'; political foes, that is, for he never could have had a private enemy. The leadership of the House of Commons, which Lord Randolph Churchill so soon gave up, may, no doubt, come some time or other into stronger hands than those of Sir Stafford Northcote; but there can hardly come a leader of an English Administration, or of an English Opposition, who will leave behind him a purer record or a better memory than that which Lord Iddesleigh bequeathed to our Parliamentary history.

CHAPTER XII.

'PARNELLISM AND CRIME.'

ON April 18, 1887, the world was startled by an extraordinary publication in the *Times* newspaper. The *Times* printed in facsimile a letter professing to be signed by Mr. Parnell, and dated May 15, 1882, a few days after the murders in the Phœnix Park—a letter which, had it been genuine, would undoubtedly have proved that Mr. Parnell, if not actually an accomplice in the murder plot, was certainly not sorry that the murders had been committed. It will be remembered that at the first meeting of the House after the murders Mr. Parnell had professed the uttermost horror of the crimes, and had declared his belief that the murders were committed by men who absolutely detested the course of constitutional policy with which he had been identified, and who had perpetrated that crime as the deadliest blow in their power against his hopes, and against the new policy which the Government of that day had resolved to adopt. The letter is enough of a historical document to be worth reproducing:—

'Dear Sir,—I am not surprised at your friend's anger, but he and you should know that to denounce

the murders was the only course open to us. To do that promptly was plainly our best policy. But you can tell him, and all others concerned, that, though I regret the accident of Lord Frederick Cavendish's death, I cannot refuse to admit that Burke got no more than his deserts. You are at liberty to show him this, and others whom you can trust also, but let not my address be known. He can write to House of Commons.

'Yours very truly,

'CHARLES S. PARNELL.'

The *Times* explained that the body of the manuscript was apparently not in Mr. Parnell's handwriting, but that the signature and the words 'Yours very truly' were unquestionably written by him; and it added, that 'if any member of Parliament doubts the fact, he can easily satisfy himself on the matter by comparing the handwriting with that of Mr. Parnell in the book containing the signatures of members when they first take their seats in the House of Commons.'

The letter, as we have said, created an immense sensation. The House of Commons was at the time engaged in a debate on the second reading of the new Coercion Bill for Ireland introduced by the Conservative Government. Mr. Sexton, one of the most distinguished of the Irish Nationalist members, opened the debate, and, without waiting for any opportunity of communication with Mr. Parnell, denounced the letter as 'a base, manifest, clumsy, and malignant forgery.' Mr. Sexton took his course on the simple ground that, from his personal know-

ledge of Mr. Parnell, he well knew that Mr. Parnell never could have written, or signed, or authorised such a letter. To all political and personal associates of Mr. Parnell the letter was as obviously a forgery as if it had been signed with the name of 'William Ewart Gladstone,' or 'Hartington,' or 'Arthur J. Balfour.' Mr. Parnell's friends and colleagues knew him to be a man of perfect honour, and one who utterly detested crime and outrage in any form, not alone upon his own account, but also because he was convinced that, where Ireland's affairs were concerned, 'the man who commits a crime,' to adopt O'Connell's words, 'gives strength to the enemy.' Therefore Mr. Sexton naturally had no more hesitation in branding the letter as a forgery than he would have had in denying, without any previous consultation with Mr. Parnell, the allegation that Mr. Parnell had forged a cheque or picked a pocket. Mr. Parnell came into the House while Mr. Sexton was speaking, and when he got a chance of making a statement he denounced the letter in the *Times* as 'a villainous and barefaced forgery.' In order, he said, that his denial might be full and complete, he declared that he had never written such a letter, never authorised such a letter to be written, never signed such a letter, and never saw the letter itself until it appeared in the *Times* of that morning. He declared that no man was ever more surprised and thunderstruck than he was when he heard of the Phœnix Park murders. 'It is no exaggeration to say,' he added, 'that if I had been in

the Phœnix Park that day I would have stood between Lord Frederick Cavendish and the daggers of the assassins, and between the daggers and Mr. Burke as well.' He declared—and all those who knew him believed in the truth of his words—that no other man had suffered more than he had suffered from the terrible deed in the Phœnix Park, and that no nation had suffered so much from it as the Irish nation. It is not, perhaps, saying too much to add that the sympathy of the great majority of the House of Commons went with Mr. Parnell. One Conservative member, a man of ability and high character, declared at once that he felt no doubt upon the subject, and was convinced that the letter published in the *Times* was a gross and monstrous forgery.

The *Times* published other letters purporting to be signed by Mr. Parnell, and all written in the same spirit. Some of them were set down at once by everyone who knew Mr. Parnell as very stupid forgeries, for the mere reason, if nothing more, that they contained absurd errors in spelling. Now, all Mr. Parnell's friends knew very well that one of his strongest peculiarities was a passion for accuracy in spelling. Of course the *Times* had not said that Mr. Parnell wrote the letters with his own hand, but, to those who knew Mr. Parnell, the idea of his putting his name to any ill-spelt document was impossible to entertain for a moment.

The *Times* had for long before been conducting a series of systematic attacks on Mr. Parnell. It had evidently wound itself up into the mood that Mr.

Parnell was another Catiline, or worse than that—a common enemy of mankind. It would be impossible to believe that the conductors of a journal like the *Times* could have been influenced by any purely malignant hatred of Mr. Parnell as a public man. But they had undoubtedly wrought themselves up into that temper which can believe anything, however bad, of an extreme political opponent. The conductors of the *Times*, many years before, had got into the same way of thinking about Daniel O'Connell, and had denounced him and vilified him as if he were guilty of the basest crimes that could defame humanity. No one can doubt that the conductors of the *Times* believed that the documents they published were genuine. But there was apparently no trouble whatever taken to ascertain whether the letters were authentic or not. The letters were given or sold to the *Times* by a man named Pigott, a person who had once conducted a Dublin National newspaper enterprise, and who afterwards lived, or tried to live, by begging-letters and by blackmail. Again and again this man had written to some of Mr. Parnell's political associates, urging, beseeching, and praying them to get him some help from Mr. Parnell out of the National funds; and again and again Mr. Parnell had advised his friends not even to answer the letters of such a man. As it was well said afterwards, if the correspondent of the *Times* in Ireland had asked the sentry on guard at Dublin Castle what sort of a man was Pigott, the sentinel would have warned the correspondent to have nothing to do with such a creature.

It is not necessary to say too much about Pigott. He was a man of a class which is always appearing and reappearing in history—a man of the order of Titus Oates. There is nothing surprising in the appearance of such a man at the time of a great political crisis; but the very surprising thing is that the conductors of a great paper like the *Times* should be taken in for a moment by so pitiful a scoundrel. We believe it is quite certain that the letters had been shown in the first instance to the private secretary of Lord Hartington, and that the secretary did not think it worth his while even to submit such rubbish to his chief. The *Times* had, however, committed itself to a series of articles on 'Parnellism and Crime,' and seemed as though it were bound in honour to keep up to the level of its own assertions. We shall see afterwards that these statements became the occasion for a special judicial commission. The articles on 'Parnellism and Crime' contained the most astonishing statements, some of which might be considered as absolutely ludicrous, if the whole subject were not rather too solemn and grim for laughter. One of these allegations—afterwards, to be sure, withdrawn—was that the Phœnix Park murders had been arranged by Mr. Parnell and a number of his friends at that lonely spot, convenient for conspiracy, the Willesden Junction Station. Among the alleged conspirators with Mr. Parnell in this Willesden Junction gathering was the writer of the present History.

Of course, all these 'charges and allegations,' as

they afterwards came to be formally called, could not be allowed to pass without some form of inquiry. The question was brought up again and again in the House of Commons. Mr. Parnell himself challenged the fullest investigation, and the only question with him and with his friends was as to the form which the inquiry ought to take. Mr. Parnell was quite willing to submit the whole matter to the judgment of a committee of the House of Commons, and one of Mr. Parnell's colleagues offered on his behalf to accept the judgment of a Parliamentary committee to be composed exclusively of members belonging to the Conservative party. Mr. Parnell and his colleagues were perfectly satisfied to submit the charges of the *Times* to the judgment of any committee of gentlemen in the House of Commons, no matter what their political opinions might be. In the end the Government proposed the appointment of a special commission of three judges to inquire into the 'charges and allegations' made in the *Times* against Mr. Parnell and certain of his colleagues. An Act of Parliament passed on August 13, 1888, appointed the Commission. Sir James Hannen was made president of the court. Mr. Justice Day and Mr. Justice A. L. Smith were the other members. The passing of this measure was strongly opposed by the Liberal party in the House of Commons. It was argued that it established a new and very dangerous precedent in the way of dealing with political controversy. A Government, it was urged, might at any time consign a certain number of its political

opponents to be tried before a court of judges, each of whom might be a Government partisan, and might thus obtain a judgment amounting to a condemnation of a whole political party. It was not suggested that Sir James Hannen, or Mr. Justice Day, or Mr. Justice Smith, was a man in the least degree likely to be guided by his political opinions in the decision of such a question; but then, it was well known that the political opinions of these judges were opposed to those of Mr. Parnell; and, in any case, it could not be denied that the introduction of such a precedent would sanction in troublous times the setting-up of a tribunal which might be simply a court to find opponents of the Government guilty of some offence not created by statute law. The functions of the Special Commission were not in any sense judicial. Mr. Parnell was not charged with any direct offence committed against the law of the land. Nobody in his senses supposed, and the suggestion was never made by the stoutest Conservative in the House of Commons, that the *Times* could be in possession of evidence to prove that Mr. Parnell was an accomplice in the Phœnix Park murders. As a matter of historical interest, it may be noticed that nobody in the House of Commons itself believed Mr. Parnell to be guilty of having given any sanction, either before or after, to such a crime.

The Commission, however, was appointed to consider a vast number of historical and controversial questions, on which no humanly constituted court of law could possibly give a decision that would be

binding upon anybody. Did the speech of Mr. Parnell delivered in Dublin tend to stimulate hatred of the Government in the county of Cork? Did the speeches of Mr. Parnell and two or three of his friends made in New York, and Washington, and Chicago, tend to rouse the Irish people at home into hostility to the Queen's Government? All these are purely historical questions, with which no strict judicial court can possibly deal. There are laws which limit the freedom of speech. There are laws against sedition—that is to say, direct incentive to rebellion, even where no overt act has been committed. If a man by his speech offends against any of these statutes, he can be arraigned for the offence and tried before a court of law. But to this Special Commission court was assigned the task of giving the legal decision of three judges on the whole struggle of Irish history. Suppose the three agreed that the Irish people ought to have been content with the Government under which Providence had been pleased to set them, and ought not to have carried on any agitation against it, who on earth would have cared anything for such a judgment? We might as well have had a special commission of three judges to decide whether the American people were right in making their declaration of independence. If the Special Commission had been limited to the task of deciding whether the letters alleged to be dictated and signed by Mr. Parnell were genuine or were forgeries, that would have been a question on which the decision of three English judges would have been

accepted as authoritative by most people. Or if the question submitted to the judges had been, whether Mr. Parnell had or had not any complicity in the Phœnix Park murders, on that subject, too, the decision of the judges would have been felt by most of the public to be a declaration of the highest importance. But as the Commission was framed it authorised these three judges to pronounce a decision on every subject belonging to the whole political agitation in Ireland. Such a scheme could only tend to lower the authority of the judges, because assuredly no rational being in Great Britain or Ireland could have been affected one way or the other by any decision which the judges might pronounce as to the reasonableness of the Home Rule movement, or the propriety of the Plan of Campaign. Therefore the leading members of the Opposition fought strongly against the appointment of any commission with so limitless a field of inquiry. The Government, however, being in a majority, carried their point and set up their Commission.

On the whole, there seems to us no reason now to regret that the Commission was set up. On the main questions, which had a distinct and pressing interest—on the personal questions, if we may put it so, the decision of the judges was entirely satisfactory to most of the men against whom the 'charges and allegations' were made. Perhaps also it is just as well for the purposes of history that we should have an authenticated account of all the wild things that were spoken or written or done during a period of

national convulsion. Otherwise, there was a good deal about the whole inquiry, however grave and important its purpose may have been, which partook of the character of opera-bouffe. The tribunal was like one of which Carlyle spoke many years before, and which seemed to him to have been summoned for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not a certain man had a nose on his face. If there was anybody who really did not know that a terrible land struggle, a life or death struggle, was going on in Ireland, such a man ought to have been deeply interested in the proceedings of the Special Commission. But he might have got all the information he wanted out of the London daily papers. If he were anxious to know how much the teachings of Mr. Parnell, or of Mr. Davitt, or of Mr. Dillon, had to do with the creating of a disturbed condition of things in Ireland, that was a question on which everybody could form his own opinion just as well as any of the three judges in the Commission court. If there was any human being alive who really fancied that an impassioned political and agrarian agitation ever was carried on in any country in the world without some rough speaking and some wild deeds, then, indeed, such person might have found a student's interest in the reading of the evidence brought before the court. What people did really want to know was, whether Mr. Parnell had dictated and signed the letters published by the *Times*, and whether Mr. Parnell and any of his colleagues were accessories before or after the fact to the murders in

the Phœnix Park. As to the general character of the agitation in Ireland, there was nothing to be added to what the public already had ample means of knowing.

The court met for the first time for actual business on October 22, 1888. The Attorney-General of the Conservative Government conducted the case on behalf of the *Times*, and the leading counsel on Mr. Parnell's side was Sir Charles Russell, now Lord Russell of Killowen, Chief Justice of England. The charges made by the *Times* amounted in substance to an indictment against the whole Irish people at home and abroad. The counsel for the *Times* were more ingenious than Edmund Burke. Burke said he knew of no means for the framing of an indictment against a nation. The counsel for the *Times* were able to manage the work. The defendants in the proceedings were, speaking generally, the whole body of the Irish Nationalist members of Parliament, and the members of all the various Irish organisations 'known as the Irish Land League, the Irish National Land League and Labour and Industrial Union, the Ladies' Land League, the Ladies' Irish Land League and Labour and Industrial Union, the National League, and the affiliated societies in Great Britain and America, all forming one connected and continuous organisation.' Then the indictment went on to say that 'the ultimate object of the organisation was to establish the absolute independence of Ireland as a separate nation. With a view to effect this, one of the immediate objects of the said conspiracy or organisation was to promote

an agrarian agitation against the payment of agricultural rents, thereby securing the co-operation of the tenant farmers of Ireland, and at the same time the impoverishment and ultimate expulsion from the country of the Irish landlords, who were styled the English garrison.' Here, then, was a cheerful little indictment brought against several millions of Irish persons, men and women, abroad and at home. The first application, made to the court on the opening day, was in itself a curious illustration of the futility of the general proceedings. Sir Charles Russell applied for the release of two Irish members who were imprisoned after having been convicted of delivering speeches which were found to be contrary to law, and who were believed to be material witnesses in the proceedings before the court. Here, then, was the fact made clear that the civil courts of law were sitting in Ireland, that the Queen's writ still ran in Ireland, and that if men were convicted of a breach of any statute they could be sent to prison. One of the prisoners whose names were mentioned by Sir Charles Russell was Mr. John Dillon, son of a most respected Irish patriot and gentleman, and himself a man of the highest and most honourable position. It did not need the setting up of any new tribunal to show that the condition of things in Ireland must be serious indeed when a man of Mr. Dillon's character was imprisoned for a breach of the law. Everybody knew that the moment Mr. Dillon was released from prison he would be welcomed cordially back to his place in Parliament by

nine out of every ten of the members of the House of Commons, no matter to what party they belonged. The agitation going on in Ireland could only be judged according to one's convictions as to its necessity or its inexpediency. Mr. Dillon, as a matter of fact, had friends amongst the highest order of her Majesty's judges in England, who, although they might not have approved of every hasty word spoken by him at a public meeting, were well convinced that, on the whole, the agitation in Ireland had an honourable and a patriotic purpose, and that those who mainly conducted it were not adventurers or criminals, or the promoters or the paymasters of crime.

The Commission went on with its work week after week, and even month after month. Witnesses were called from all parts of Ireland—landlords, land-agents, magistrates, police-officers, parish priests, curates, women of all ranks and classes—all to prove that somebody said something here and somebody else said something there; that there were riots at evictions, that resistance was offered to the police, and that outrage and murder were committed in too many instances. It needed no ghost come from the grave, it did not even need three learned judges come from their grave pursuits, to obtain such information as that. One of the defendants, as the winter was setting in and the proceedings seemed likely to be the same sort of thing for months to come, obtained the permission of both parties in the case to spend the worst of the winter-time in Algiers.

Nobody had the faintest doubt that he would return whenever his presence was required. There was, of course, the usual evidence of the paid spy, the professional informer. There were, no doubt, some secret societies amongst the American-Irish, and the only question of any real importance was, how to establish some direct connection between these societies and Mr. Parnell and his friends. It was not supposed to be probable that the decision of the three judges in the Commission court would have the effect of disbanding the secret societies in America. The evidence of the professional informers went as far as it could in the desired way, but the truth was that the public in general did not take much account of the professional informer. Nor was it news to anybody that there were Irish associations in America which repudiated Mr. Parnell and his constitutional movement, and would be contented with nothing less than the independence of Ireland obtained on some undefined battle-field. The professional informers were wholly unsuccessful in connecting Mr. Parnell with the encouragement of any such scheme. But until the evidence of Pigott came on the informer and his testimony made the only really interesting or dramatic part of the proceedings before the court. By the time Pigott's turn had come the question before the public mind narrowed itself down to two particular points. The first was—Did Mr. Parnell dictate or sign the letters? The next point was—Did Mr. Parnell pay over to a man named Frank Byrne a sum of money in order to

enable him to escape from these islands after the murders in the Phœnix Park? Apart from these questions, nobody any longer cared much about the whole progress of the evidence.

When Pigott's turn arrived, then indeed a keen interest was aroused, and the interest in the course of events soon turned into horror. Under the merciless cross-examination of Sir Charles Russell the wretched man utterly broke down. He was invited to write on paper a miscellaneous list of words which Sir Charles Russell dictated to him. This list contained all the words misspelt in the letters which professed to be signed by Mr. Parnell, and in every instance Pigott's misspelling was identical with that of the documents published in the *Times*. This, with the revelation of Pigott's previous life and character, settled the whole question so far as his evidence was concerned. Pigott did not present himself for any further cross-examination. He fled from the country. He took refuge in Madrid, and there, being visited by the police, he killed himself. A warrant had, in fact, been issued for his arrest under the extradition treaty with Spain, and it was only when the officers of the Madrid police knocked at his door that he saw the game was up and committed suicide. It was not his suicide, however, which settled the question of the forged letters. That question had been settled in advance of his death. He had made in private an unsolicited confession to an English member of Parliament—Mr. Labouchere—that the letters were all of them forgeries. He had made about the same

time a qualified confession to another person, to the effect that some of the letters were forgeries and some genuine. He had written to the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin a long series of letters, warning the Archbishop that a great danger was threatening the Irish party by the publication of forged letters tending to incriminate Mr. Parnell and some of his colleagues with the fomenting of outrage and murder in Ireland. He had written to a prominent Irish Nationalist, undertaking to countermine and explode the forgery plot if he were paid a sum of 500*l.* to relieve him from his money troubles. He had been writing all sorts of letters to various public men, threatening them with criminal exposure or offering to defend them against it. But everything had to do with a certain amount of money contribution. He had applied for pecuniary relief on the ground of the death of some near relative who was actually then alive, or who had died years before. He declared in the court that he had had a long and private interview at a hotel in Covent Garden with a member of the Irish Parliamentary party well known in London, and that they had come to a friendly understanding on all sorts of subjects. That member of the Irish Parliamentary party was able to go into the witness-box and to swear that, although he had received many begging-letters and some threatening letters from Pigott, he had never seen the man in all his life.

There did not seem any particular motive for this statement on Pigott's part. Apparently he had

a taste for perjury, a sort of passion for perjury, and possibly regarded perjury and forgery as branches of the fine arts. Mr. Frederick Bayham, in Thackeray's novel, 'The Newcomes,' says to somebody, 'It is my firm belief that, on the whole, you would rather lie than not.' Unfortunately, Pigott apparently would much rather lie than not. It is only fair to observe that, before the suicide of Pigott was known in England, the Attorney-General, acting for the *Times*, withdrew the forged letters altogether from the case, and expressed his deep regret that they had ever been published. Mr. Parnell afterwards recovered damages from the *Times* for the publication of the letters, with the object of completely re-establishing his character, and the *Times* offered no real opposition to the action. There had been a sad, a strange, and an unaccountable mistake on the part of the conductors of a great journal. Nothing of the kind had ever occurred before. Nothing of the kind probably will ever occur again in the history of the English newspaper.

The interest in the proceedings of the Commission was somewhat stimulated by the appearance of Mr. Parnell himself in the witness-box, and by the speech of Mr. Davitt in his own defence. But the substance of the inquiry was practically done with. The powerful reasoning and noble eloquence of Sir Charles Russell in his opening speech for the defence, which, of course, preceded the evidence of the defendants, will pass into history and be remembered for its own sake. It was not until February 13, 1890, that the report of the Special Commission

was issued and laid upon the table of the House of Commons. There was a scene of wondrous excitement when the first bundles of the report reached the House. Members were too impatient to wait for their distribution in the office where Parliamentary documents are to be had. The bundles were simply flung upon the floor in the inner lobby, and were scrambled for by the members. No report presented to Parliament in our time has ever created such a scene of excitement. The report, as we have already said, must have been satisfactory to every reasonable man. If the great bulk of its contents had but a purely historical interest, and only contained such information as everybody might have obtained from other sources, that was in no sense the fault of the three judges. They had been appointed to make a vast, comprehensive, and wholly unnecessary inquiry into the condition of Ireland, and they had to do their duty. But on the only questions concerning which rational persons cared anything whatever for the opinions of any commission of inquiry the judges were clear, explicit, and impartial. They found that the members of Parliament who were defendants in the case were not collectively engaged in any conspiracy to establish the separate independence of Ireland, but that certain Nationalists inside and outside of Parliament were anxious for separation, and that some of these were anxious to use the Land League as an indirect means of accomplishing Ireland's independence. All this, of course, everybody knew before. Many Irish

members had proclaimed over and over again that they asked for nothing but the right of Ireland to manage her own domestic affairs as a partner in the British Empire. Other Irish Nationalists had openly proclaimed that they had no hope in anything but the absolute independence of Ireland. These, however, were the few, and most of them were men of no real authority and influence. The judges found that the charge of insincerity in denouncing crime was not established against the defendants, and they found, of course, that the facsimile letters were forgeries. They found that neither Mr. Parnell nor any of his colleagues had supplied Frank Byrne with any money in order to enable him to escape from justice.

These were the two questions in which alone any real public interest was felt. Nobody could have been greatly excited over the finding that Mr. Davitt had been a member of the Fenian organisation. Mr. Davitt had been convicted and had suffered many years' imprisonment for his share in the Fenian movement of 1867, and he would have been greatly surprised indeed to hear that anyone supposed he had not been a Fenian. Neither did it add very much to the common public opinion of Mr. Davitt that the judges found him to have been quite sincere in his public denunciations of criminal outrage. Mr. Davitt was well known to all the leading men of the English democracy, and to many who were not democrats in any sense of the word, and he was recognised by everyone as a man of stainless character, to whom the bare idea of crime was naturally

hateful. The judges found that the defendants had not paid anyone to commit crime, but that some of them did incite to intimidation, although not to the commission of more serious offences. The report was very long, and very interesting in its way, and, as has been said before, it may prove a valuable historical study for generations to come. But the setting up of such a tribunal is a task which we fancy no English Government will ever attempt again.

By the public in general, even by those who least sympathised with the political action of Mr. Parnell and his colleagues, the report was accepted simply as a verdict of acquittal. The first time Mr. Parnell appeared in the House of Commons after the issue of the report he was greeted by an extraordinary demonstration. It was late when he came in, and the House was crowded. The moment he appeared the whole Liberal party, including the occupants of the front Opposition bench, rose to their feet, and, standing, cheered him again and again. Some even among the Tory ranks joined in the demonstration. It was felt to be an honourable testimonial of sympathy offered to a man who had been cruelly calumniated, and who had obtained a verdict of acquittal from a tribunal created by his political opponents to inquire into the conditions and character of his whole career. Not often has such a scene been witnessed in the House of Commons, and, whatever different persons may think of Mr. Parnell's politics, there are very few indeed who will not say

that it was a generous and a manly tribute, which did honour to the House of Commons.

Mr. Parnell himself seemed embarrassed and confused by this totally unexpected exhibition of feeling. He was by nature a shy and retiring man, and as he settled into his seat he said to a friend who was next to him, 'Why did you fellows all stand up? You almost frightened me.'

That scene was the zenith of Mr. Parnell's Parliamentary career.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE.

EARLY in the year 1887 it became known that Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had given up the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland, and that Mr. Arthur Balfour, up to that time holding the new office of Secretary for Scotland, had been appointed his successor. Everyone was sorry to hear of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's resignation, and especially because of the reason for it. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had been affected by some serious trouble with both eyes, and the most eminent oculists declared that he must absolutely give up all official work for the time. We are glad to say that the trouble was afterwards overcome, and that Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was able later on to return to Parliamentary, and even to official, work. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had the cordial respect of everyone in the House of Commons. He was an able administrator, a courteous and kindly gentleman. During his tenure of office as Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant a great financial crisis suddenly came on in the south of Ireland, a sort of local 'Black Friday.' Sir Michael lent his most cordial and painstaking assistance to the Irish Nation-

alist members in the device of measures to tide over the trouble. Mr. Arthur Balfour, in becoming Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, entered on his first difficult official position. He was a man of undoubtedly great capacity, and, if he did not succeed as Irish Chief Secretary, it may be said of him, as of his predecessor, that it was only because success was absolutely impossible to a member of a Tory Government endeavouring to administer the affairs of Ireland. The utmost any minister employing Tory measures could do in Ireland was to turn the Government there into an armed camp, and keep order by the mere force of military and police. Even that much no Tory Government had yet succeeded in doing. No fault must be found with Sir Michael Hicks-Beach or Mr. Balfour, because neither could achieve the impossible.

On May 17, 1887, Mr. W. H. Smith, who had become leader of the House of Commons when Lord Randolph Churchill went out of office, proposed that in celebration of the fiftieth year of her Majesty's reign the House should attend at St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, on the following Sunday. Mr. Gladstone seconded the motion, which was unanimously agreed to. This was, in point of fact, the formal opening of the Jubilee celebrations of 1887. The very next day the *London Gazette* announced the issue of the Jubilee coinage, to be marked by an alteration in the likeness of her Majesty, and by the introduction of a new coin, the double florin. The great day of celebration was on June 21. The Jubilee was shared in almost all over the world. It

was honoured in the European capitals, in Canada, in Australasia, in all the British colonies, and not only by English people in the United States, but by Americans themselves, among whom Queen Victoria has always been very popular. June 21 in London was a day of brilliant sunshine, just suited to set off the magnificent ceremonial. Every description given of that day's display testifies to a marvellous success. London would not seem in general to be a metropolis well adapted for a splendid show, but on this occasion the testimony of all observers is agreed upon the fact that nothing could have been more magnificent and more superb. Miles and miles of streets were decorated with flags, evergreens, and festoons, and every nook and corner and available inch of ground on the line of procession was crowded by spectators, whose enthusiasm seemed to know no bounds. There was a service at Westminster Abbey, and the Queen drove from Buckingham Palace to the Abbey, with the royal princes on horseback acting as an escort to her carriage. Among those who thus escorted the Queen, the tall and stately figure of Frederick, the German Prince Imperial, the husband of the English Princess Victoria, was observed and admired by everyone. This soldier-prince had been trained to the art of war from his youth upwards, had fought in campaign after campaign, bearing all the hardships of the field just as the private soldier had to bear them, and in the struggle between Prussia and Austria he had come out as a rival and an equal of his cousin, the famous Red Prince. Few who looked on him with

admiration that bright day could have foretold how soon that soldierly and stately figure was destined to crumble into dust.

There can be no doubt whatever about the enthusiasm with which the vast majority of the Queen's subjects in London and all through England and Scotland took part in that Jubilee. Everyone who was capable of thinking over the subject at all in a reasonable way must have known, and did know, that the Queen was the first constitutional sovereign who ever occupied the throne of England, and that she was, on the whole, the best English sovereign that ever reigned. Down in the East-end of London, where the grip of pinching poverty pressed hard on thousands of people, there were, no doubt, some mutterings and grumblings at the expense lavished on a great pageant when men and women were dying of hunger or swooning from weakness at the workhouse gates. But the genius of man has not yet discovered, or come near to discovering, the art of rulership which shall find employment for all deserving men and women; and it was, in any case, no question of royalty against any other form of government, for only in the imaginations of children lingers the idea that the sovereign is able to make everyone comfortable and happy. It is only bare justice to the Queen's reign to say that her Majesty has never failed to do all that lay in her power for her people in Great Britain whose condition came most nearly within her range, and that her own judgment has always dictated, or at least confirmed, a wise and a saving

policy towards her great colonial and Indian empire. When the Queen came first to the throne the Canadian colonies were torn asunder by internal discord and by rebellion against the Crown. The policy which converted Canada to the most devoted loyalty towards the sovereign was, as we know, accepted and approved by the Queen herself. Nowhere over the world—not even in England—was the Queen's Jubilee celebrated with greater enthusiasm than in the several provinces of Canada.

One discordant note, and one only, was heard during the celebration of the Jubilee. Perhaps it ought not even to be called a discordant note. Perhaps we ought rather to say that one note of possible acclamation was silent. The Irish people as a whole bore no part in the celebration. On May 23 in the Jubilee year the Dublin Corporation agreed by twenty-five votes to five not to take any share in the public rejoicing. This was, indeed, a correct expression of the feeling entertained by the vast majority of the Irish people. It would be to fail utterly in the duty of a serious historian if one were not to take account of a fact of this kind. It would be a poor and worthless attempt at a compliment to the Queen herself if the veriest courtier who was instructed to tell the story of the whole celebration were to leave such a fact unnoticed. The honest truth must be told, that Ireland had had for many years little or no share of royal countenance. The Queen during all her reign had only spent a few days in Ireland. A fortnight would more than cover

the whole time of the two or three royal visits. The Irish people were allowed to feel that they had nothing to do with the Sovereign of the country. The Irish people as a whole were long inclined to be devotedly loyal; even Mr. Disraeli admitted that much about them. They cared little or nothing about the controversy between monarchy and republic. Their natural inclination was to an enthusiastic and, I had almost said, a servile, loyalty to the appointed sovereign. They became wildly enthusiastic over George, the Prince Regent; and, as I have shown in the earliest part of this History, there was no one living who welcomed the new Sovereign at the opening of her reign with a more chivalrous and thorough enthusiasm than Daniel O'Connell, who was then the recognised leader and dictator of the whole Catholic and Nationalist population of Ireland. But it would be impossible to doubt that the enthusiasm inspired by O'Connell soon began to chill and to die. To Ireland the Sovereign became a mere name or a mere myth, for the Crown was only represented by a partisan viceroy, who was changed with each succeeding change of partisan government. At the very time when London was celebrating the Royal Jubilee the Irish Nationalist members were struggling vainly against the passing of a Coercion Bill for Ireland, introducing an exceptional system of legislation, which no man in his senses would have thought of applying to England or to Scotland, amid the most tumultuous conditions of political controversy.

We must take all these considerations into

account when we have to describe the cold and distant attitude maintained by Nationalist Ireland towards the celebration of the Queen's Jubilee. No word of disrespect was spoken or written. Of course, no educated Irishman imagined for a moment that the Queen was responsible for the long denial of good land laws to Ireland, or for the introduction of coercion measures, any more than she was for the enormous financial overcharges put upon Ireland, which the inquiry of the late Parliamentary Commission has disclosed. It is not likely that there was one single man or woman in Ireland who had not a thorough feeling of respect for the Queen personally. She was regarded everywhere in Ireland as a noble example to wives and to mothers. But the feeling was that Ireland had been left out in the cold, that she was the Cinderella, that she was the poor step-sister, and that she had nothing to do with the rapturous celebration of the reign of any English sovereign. That was the one depressing part of the whole ceremonial. No one regretted it more than the author of this History, but no one more thoroughly recognised the fact that it was inevitable. History would be written in vain, even contemporary history, if one were not to notice such a fact, and to invite attention to its teaching.

Except, however, for this one shadow falling on a part of the ground which might otherwise have been a scene of gladsome celebration, the whole Jubilee was a demonstration of loyalty, of devotion, and of affection which might have brought a thrill of pride to the heart of the greatest sovereign in the world.

No one can doubt that the Queen felt a genuine delight in this spontaneous tribute of admiration from her people. On June 24 she sent from Windsor to the Home Secretary a letter of thanks to her subjects in general which is touching, and well deserves to be recorded and remembered. 'I am anxious,' so ran the words of her Majesty's letter, 'to express to my people my warm thanks for the kind, and more than kind, reception I met with on going to and returning from Westminster Abbey with all my children and grandchildren. The enthusiastic reception I met with then, as well as on all these eventful days in London, as well as in Windsor on the occasion of my Jubilee, has touched me most deeply. It has shown that the labour and anxiety of fifty long years, twenty-two of which I spent in unclouded happiness, shared and cheered by my beloved husband, while an equal number were full of sorrows and trials, borne without his sheltering arm and wise help, have been appreciated by my people. This feeling, and the sense of duty towards my dear country and subjects, who are so inseparably bound up with my life, will encourage me in my task, often a very difficult and arduous one, during the remainder of that life. The wonderful order preserved on this occasion, and the good behaviour of the enormous multitudes assembled, merit my highest admiration. That God may protect and abundantly bless my country is my fervent prayer.'

The Conservative Government undoubtedly did some good work during its five or six years of

power. There were several excellent administrators among its ranks, not men who went in much for showy speech-making, or flashing cut-and-thrust in debate, but men who were capable of not merely abolishing old abuses, but of devising new and working systems. One task of difficulty had long been perplexing the minds of successive Administrations, Liberal and Conservative. Each Government had tried in turn to settle the difficulty, or, at all events, to make some advance towards a settlement. The Conservative Government was lucky enough to come in for the first really good chance, and to know how to make use of the opportunity. How to govern London had been for years a most perplexing question. At one end of the metropolis there was the Corporation of the City, presided over by the Lord Mayor, who was chosen annually to fill the office. The City of London was, and is, a very small place comparatively, and has only a very limited resident population. That is to say, the greater part of the City has long been occupied by banks and offices of various kinds, and shops the owners of which did not live on the premises, but went out every evening to their homes in the West-end or in some of the suburbs, and left their places of business in the charge of caretakers. The City of London was, in any case, only a small corner of the great metropolis. But then, the City of London had its history and its traditions. It had represented the municipal life of London for many centuries. It had welcomed kings and disputed with kings. It had fostered literature. Within its domain

some of the greatest English men of letters were born and lived and died. On the whole, with whatever defects and shortcomings and blunders, it was beyond doubt a stately and a famous municipal institution, not unlike some of the great municipalities of Italy in the mediæval days.

Outside the City of London, the whole metropolis may be said to have been managed up to a certain date on the parish vestry system. London, indeed, was not a city, but an agglomeration of cities or towns. There was the City of Westminster, with its distinct and separate representation in the House of Commons. There was Finsbury under the same conditions. There were Lambeth and Southwark on the southern side, and there were other great divisions as well. Mr. Gladstone's Act of 1884 had reconstructed and reorganised London for political representation in a much more symmetrical and satisfactory form. But the municipal government of London was not re-moulded by that measure. The management of the vast extent of the greater London by vestries had long been a source of trouble and confusion. The regulations of one vestry were often totally different from those of another, and sometimes the houses of one side of a street were in, let us say, Vestry No. 1, while the houses on the other side of the street were in Vestry No. 2. This condition of things frequently led to the most ludicrous, and at the same time the most vexatious, anomalies. The rating in one parish might be moderate, and even low, because it happened to have a vestry capable of managing things economi-

cally and well, while the neighbouring vestry might be rated heavily, and see all its local affairs grossly mismanaged. Efforts, therefore, were constantly made to bring about some principle of unification in the London outside the so-called City. Bills were brought into Parliament again and again for some such purpose, and were unsuccessful. At one time there was a vigorous public controversy going on as to whether London ought to be under one system or under many systems. The difficulty of settling the matter may be effectively illustrated by the fact that two such men as John Stuart Mill and Sir George Cornewall Lewis took different sides of the question. Mr. Mill aimed at unification, with one centre of authority. Sir George Cornewall Lewis spoke as if there might be some positive danger to the authority of the Government and the Crown if so vast a place as London were to be self-governing, under one single system. We all know how much phrases have to do with the guiding or the misguiding of the public mind in any momentous controversy, and there was a famous phrase at that time, to the effect that the State could not, without risk, give local self-government to 'a province covered with houses.' The province covered with houses did great duty in the controversies of those now distant days. After a while the necessity for some new system, and the importance of the whole subject, evolved the creation of the Metropolitan Board of Works. This board was established in 1855, for 'the management of public works in which

the metropolis had a common interest.' It was elected, not by popular suffrage, but by the vestries and other local bodies. It did not work very successfully. No institution of the kind, elected by an indirect suffrage, ever does work very successfully; and in 1888 a Royal Commission was appointed by Parliament to inquire into the whole conditions and operations of the Board. There were many charges made against the Board of negligence, inefficiency, irregularities, blunders, and more or less extensive jobbery. There were even some charges made of corruption. But it did not seem that there was any clear evidence of corruption to be established against most of those who were charged with it. Yet, from the moment when the Commission made its report, it was evident to all who were in touch with Parliamentary affairs that the Metropolitan Board of Works was doomed. Indeed, it had been for a long time in the thought of more than one Government that some advance must be made towards the establishment of a more directly representative system than that on which the Metropolitan Board of Works was founded. So long as human nature remains what we know it to be, it would be impossible that any board entrusted with such powers, and at the same time relieved from all direct responsibility by such a method of election, should not lapse into indifference, carelessness, neglect, favouritism, jobbery, and sometimes even downright corruption. The Metropolitan Board of Works was therefore got rid of, and a good many people thought that, the less said about its

passing away, the better. It had come to be, if not a public scandal, yet certainly something very nearly approaching to a public scandal. At all events, it was an anomaly and an obstruction in the way of the improvement of London. Let us do it justice, however, no matter what its later faults may have been. It set to work in the beginning with a certain reforming energy. It constructed the Thames Embankment, and it greatly helped in the purification of the river. These works are its best monument. Had it been positively faultless in its administration its mode of construction would have had to be reorganised. The country had outgrown the ways and the feelings when a great metropolis like London could be governed by a body of delegates sent in by all manner of local vestries and local boards, about whom the outer world knew nothing whatever.

On the ruins, therefore, of the Metropolitan Board of Works the government of the London County Council was set up in 1888. The London County Council had wider attributes than those given to the Metropolitan Board of Works. It had the full municipal government of that vast agglomeration of cities and towns outside the City of London which we now call the metropolis. It was even entrusted, to a certain extent, with the direction and the control of the places of amusement to be set up in London. The Lord Chamberlain has in his hands the regulation of the Middlesex theatres, but in the hands of the County Council was placed a direct control over the conduct of the music-halls and of

the public dancing-halls. We have heard a good deal lately of the criticisms and the controversies which rise out of the manner of exercising that jurisdiction; but the whole principle of the jurisdiction is simply that the duly and publicly elected municipal representatives of London shall have a right to some control over the conduct of entertainments which cannot be given at all without some manner of formal license. The fundamental difference between the construction of the London County Council and that of the Metropolitan Board of Works lay in the fact that the members of the County Council were to be elected as members of Parliament are—by the direct vote of their constituencies.

The London County Council thus established was fortunate from its very birth, and in the number of able and distinguished men of all ranks and classes whom it attracted to its service. The commonest of all jests in English literature for generations about municipal assemblies turned upon the supposed ignorance, assumption, and vulgar self-seeking among their members. Even the august City of London itself, with its stately history and its long traditions, was very often in this way the butt of the comic writer and the caricaturist. The first chairman whom the County Council of London appointed was no less a man than Lord Rosebery. The second chairman was Sir John Lubbock, one of the most able and highly cultured men in the House of Commons. The County Council had the right to elect for itself a certain number of aldermen, who

might be chosen from the outer public; and amongst those who were thus elected at first were Sir Thomas Farrer (now Lord Farrer), Lord Hobhouse, Lord Lingen (formerly Permanent Secretary of the Treasury), and Mr. Frederic Harrison, one of the ablest and broadest-minded men in literature, a man of exquisite culture and refined tastes—the very last man whom, under old-fashioned systems and the influence of old-fashioned caricatures, it would have been possible to think of as a London alderman. We must, of course, make allowance for old-fashioned caricatures as well as for old-fashioned systems. There were men of the City of London in former days who had intellect and culture, and something approaching to genius. There was Beckford, for example, the author of 'Vathek,' that marvellous 'fantasia' from Oriental literature, which he wrote first in French, and afterwards in English, a romance which will always find student-readers if not popular readers. But of late years the humorous idea of an alderman of the City of London had so far overgrown the serious idea, that when the London County Council came to start aldermen of its own there was a feeling of popular amazement that men like Sir Thomas Farrer and Mr. Frederic Harrison should be chosen for the office. Among the members of the new Council not aldermen were Mr. John Burns, one of the ablest, most eloquent, and most judicious representatives of English democracy; Lord Monkswell, son of the eminent judge long known as Sir Robert Collier; Augustus Harris, afterwards Sir

Augustus Harris, since dead, the owner and manager of Drury Lane Theatre; Lord Compton, Mr. Brudenell Carter; Mr. Harry Lawson (the present C.C. member for Whitechapel), who was then M.P. for West St. Pancras, and is son of the proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph*, one of the greatest London newspapers; and many other men of equal mark and equally representative position. The first County Council would certainly seem to have fulfilled in its way the idea of a thoroughly representative governing body. No class in the community, so far as we can see, failed to be represented there, even at the starting off. Lord Rosebery could represent the views of one class of society; Mr. John Burns could represent the views of another class; Sir John Lubbock could speak for the interests of the bankers, and also for the ideas of the thinking men; and so on, if we follow out all the names of the men first elected, we shall find in every name a convincing evidence that there was a fair representation of the whole community of London. Nor did the County Council since that time degenerate in its representative position. We have already shown how, in the case of the school boards, there was at first a great attraction to men of name and celebrity to accept a seat at their tables. There have been no signs of degeneracy in the anxiety of really distinguished and representative men to take a part in the discussions of the school boards since their formation. So, too, it has been with the London County Council. Men of the highest position are glad to come there,

just as representative men of the humblest position are glad to come there, and are welcomed there. It is not too much to say that the London County Council has taught some lessons to the House of Commons. Mr. Stuart Mill, in his volume of essays on 'Representative Government,' has well said that 'it is quite hopeless to induce persons of a high class, either socially or intellectually, to take a share of local administration in a corner, by piecemeal, as members of a paving-board or a drainage commission.' 'The entire local business of their town,' he says, 'is not more than a sufficient object to induce men, whose tastes incline them and whose knowledge qualifies them for national affairs, to become members of a mere local body, and devote to it the time and study which are necessary to render their presence anything more than a screen for the jobbing of inferior persons under the shelter of their responsibility.' It is well to observe that all this, and perhaps more especially the sentence that follows, was written and published many years before the breakdown of the Metropolitan Board of Works. 'A mere board of works,' Mr. Mill says, 'though it comprehend the entire metropolis, is sure to be composed of the same class of persons as the vestries of the London parishes; nor is it practicable, or even desirable, that such should not form the majority; but it is important for every purpose which local bodies are designed to serve, whether it be the enlightened and honest performance of their special duties, or the cultivation of the political intelligence

of the nation, that every such body should contain a portion of the very best minds of the locality, who are thus brought into perpetual contact, of the most useful kind, with minds of a lower grade, receiving from them what local or professional knowledge they have to give, and in return inspiring them with a portion of their own more enlarged ideas and higher and more enlightened purposes.'

A deep interest seems to attach to those memorable words of Mr. Mill. He was dead years and years before the movement set in for the abolition of the Metropolitan Board of Works, and the creation of a really representative county council for the metropolis of England; but a better or more timely advice could not possibly have been given to the public of London, and could not possibly have been accepted more faithfully and in a more earnest spirit. The constitution of the London County Council would, beyond all question, have received Mr. Mill's most cordial acceptance, could he have been living to see it a reality; and, as far as we can judge, it has been conducted on the same principles and the same lines since the first day of its formation.

One side-effect of the setting up of the London County Council was curiously different from the result of the creation of the school boards, and it was one of which Mr. Mill would most certainly have disapproved, although in the case of the County Council it was purely incidental or accidental. By the School Boards Act it was made open to women to be elected members of a board. As a matter of

fact, many distinguished women entered the London School Board and school boards all over the country, and nobody said them nay, and they rendered great service, and are rendering great service down to the present time. Indeed, it would seem only natural and reasonable that women should be expected to do good service in the direction of the manner in which children are to be taught. But when it came to the question of the county councils a different principle seemed to prevail. Lady Sandhurst, a woman distinguished for her services in the cause of education, and of every beneficent public cause, was elected to represent one of the divisions of London. Miss Cobden, daughter of the illustrious Free-trader, was elected to represent another. Mr. Beresford Hope, son of the Beresford Hope who had long been conspicuous in the House of Commons, and the grandson of the author of that 'Anastasius' which ought to be remembered and is almost forgotten, contested the seat against Lady Sandhurst. As we have said, Lady Sandhurst was elected, and Mr. Beresford Hope was defeated. Mr. Beresford Hope appealed against the right of Lady Sandhurst, and of women in general, to sit as members of the County Council. The Court of Queen's Bench took some time to consider the matter, and on April 13, 1889, ruled that as no provision was made for the election of women in the Local Government Act, neither Lady Sandhurst nor any other woman could be elected to a seat in the County Council. On May 20 in the same year a gallant attempt was made by the Earl of Meath in the House of Lords to pass

a bill allowing women to sit as members of county councils. The bill was defeated by a vast majority. Only twenty-three peers had any consideration for the rights of women, while 108 ungracious noblemen voted against them. The London County Council itself was, by a considerable majority, in favour of the admission of women to sit in county councils as they sat in school boards. But it was stated in the House of Commons, by the leader of the Conservative Administration there, that the Local Government Act, a different Act from that constituting the school boards, was not intended to give a right to women to sit in county councils, and that the Government could not even hold out a hope of being able to set apart a day for the mere discussion of the question. Mr. Mill probably, if he could have known of the events, might have been saddened to think that his teachings had not gone further towards the abolition of the curious prejudice which prevailed against the admission of women to public boards, where the influence and the guidance and the suggestions of women might have had the most practical effect. The movement, however, for what is called the emancipation of women has undoubtedly been growing in strength and much improving, we may say, in reasonableness of late years. So far as England is concerned it is altogether a movement of the reign of Queen Victoria. It has, of course, had its moods of aggressiveness, and even of extravagance: demands have been made which the more rational women of all classes would have discouraged and discoun-

tenanced. It has been the target of all manner of satire, ridicule and caricature. It has gone through its baptism of fire, as, indeed, every progressive movement always has had to do. It did not come over to England, as some people now seem to think, from the United States: on the contrary, it spread from England to the United States. It had nothing to do with the sudden, ephemeral, and hysterical outcry raised by a few women in the days of Godwin and of Shelley for the emancipation of the sex from the bondage of the matrimonial tie. Taken on the whole, the movement for woman's rights, to use the popular phrase, in these countries was thoroughly sound, healthy and practical. What it aimed at was the removal of the restrictions which prevented women from practising in some of the professions, from having votes for the election of representatives in municipal and other public bodies, and from the right to vote for members of the House of Commons. Of course, there were some women who went into extremes in England, and who made themselves, and even their movement, seem ridiculous for the time. But we have all heard of movements conducted by men, sincere and well-intentioned movements, no doubt, in which men too have sometimes made themselves and their efforts seem ridiculous enough. Even at the present moment, if we may judge from the reports in the newspapers, there are men who make this or that movement seem for the hour superlatively ridiculous. On the whole, the agitation for woman's rights, what-

ever anyone may think of its principles, its purposes, or its possibilities, was conducted with great sobriety, steadiness and moderation. The movement in this country did not even get mixed up with any question as to the right of woman to put off petticoats and adopt pantaloons. In America there was a good deal of that great question brought to the front in the early days of the effort towards the progress of woman. The mighty Bloomer controversy forced itself at one time on public attention in the United States, and by reflex action here also; but even in the United States, where it had its birth, few sensible women troubled themselves about it, and in these islands no sensible woman whatever took any account of it, except to be quietly amused by it. In America, too, the woman's rights movement got to be mixed up, rather unfortunately, with the doctrines and the doings of a few persons of both sexes who declared themselves advocates of the principle of free love—that is to say, of love given at will, and without any necessary reference to the marriage system. No doubt there were some advocates of this principle here at home as well as in the United States, but it never took any serious hold of the public mind in this country. Here, at least, it did not make way enough to render it necessary for anybody of influence to take the trouble of combating it, or even denouncing it. Even in the American States it was but the vagary of a small number of maudlin zealots and enthusiasts. We read a great deal in the newspapers here about the extravagances and the advances of the Free-love

sect in America; but only those who were personally familiar with the United States and its people at the time could have known what a small hold the whole doctrine had on the attention, not to say the sympathy, of the vast majority of American men and women. The movement for the emancipation of women, to give it its familiar name, spread to France, but took little hold of Italy, or Spain, or other continental nations. We may perhaps say, too, that it found but few representatives in Ireland. In Great Britain, and especially, perhaps, in England, it did undoubtedly make progress, and what its advocates are entitled to call steady, encouraging and healthful progress. Women are already allowed to practise in medicine, and even in surgery. Women have votes for the election of poor-law guardians, of municipal councillors, of members of the school boards and members of the county council. We now speak, it will be understood, of women who possess distinctively and separately the qualification for themselves which would enable a man under similar conditions to give a vote. Women, as we have shown, can be members of a school board, and actually have been elected, although in vain, to be members of the London County Council. The decision of the law courts in the case of Lady Sandhurst and of Miss Cobden is not likely, we should think, to be long allowed to remain the law of the land. The wit of man seems unable to suggest why a woman should not be a member of the London County Council, and yet can be a member of the London School Board.

As yet a woman cannot vote in the election of a member of the House of Commons. This, too, is one of the disabilities which are not likely to last very long. Why a woman of education and independent means should not have the right to say whether she would prefer to have Mr. Brown or Mr. Jones to represent her in Parliament it seems difficult to understand. Many measures discussed in the House of Commons deal exclusively with the interests of women, so far, at least, as it is possible for any measure affecting one sex not to take account of the interests of the other. Then, again, all manner of measures are discussed in Parliament which affect the interests of all ratepayers and of all taxpayers alike. It seems out of reason to insist that a woman who is a taxpayer and a ratepayer on her own account shall not be allowed to say whether she would rather be represented by a man who is known as an economist of the public funds, or by one who will go in for lavish and extravagant expenditure, either on the ground that such expenditure does good to trade, or on the ground that it tends to frighten the French, the Russians, the Americans, the Patagonians, the Peruvians, and the aggressive spirits of haughty Guatemala.

Of course, when one advocates, however mildly, the right of women duly qualified to vote in the election of the members of Parliament, one is instantly met with the suggestion that, if you allow women to vote in Parliamentary elections, you cannot possibly draw the line so as to prevent women from

becoming candidates themselves, and from possibly being elected to the House of Commons. Now, people always ought to be a little distrustful of any theory which would reject a salutary and a timely reform because it might lead to somebody asking for some further reform which might not be timely and which might not be salutary. It is not likely that a great many women in these islands would be very anxious to become members of the House of Commons; nor, while the present comparatively restricted suffrage system endures, is it probable that ladies ambitious in this direction would find many women, duly qualified voters, greatly anxious to assist them. It is quite certain that if at any time the public opinion of Great Britain and Ireland should so far change as to make most of us think it desirable that women should sit in the House of Commons, there will be very little difficulty in finding a Government which will introduce a bill for the purpose. In the meantime, we can all afford to wait patiently for the development of events. The strong opponents of the whole woman's movement are asking again and again whether it is proposed to allow women to enter the army and the navy. The answer is perfectly plain: that women are not physically strong enough to be of any use in serving on the battlefield or on the ocean, and that the work of womanhood as a whole is inconsistent with any such purpose. But it is quite clear that if a woman is strong enough to sit at a school board she is strong enough to sit in a county council, and that if her

mere condition of sex does not rightly disqualify her from voting for a member of a board of guardians, it does not rightfully disqualify her from voting for a member of Parliament. One remark of John Stuart Mill's is always worth bearing in mind. In no department of life, he points out, but one alone, in which intellect is concerned has woman ever proved herself, even in solitary instances, the absolute equal of man. There has been among women no rival to Shakespeare, or to Michael Angelo, or to Beethoven; but there have been women, although few indeed, who in the domain of politics stood on a level with men. The names of Elizabeth of England and of Catherine of Russia may be mentioned; and Mill mentions also the names of princesses of the native States of India who were not surpassed by any princes of their time or race in the genius for government. It therefore does seem a little paradoxical to say, that while women may write and paint and chisel statues as much as they like, they are too far inferior intellectually to men to be allowed to have any share in the practical work of politics. However that may be, it is our chief purpose now to notice that the movement for the emancipation of women is a distinct and an important fact in the reign of Queen Victoria, and that up to the present it has done, so far as we can see, no harm whatever, and a great amount of good.

CHAPTER XIV.

ONLY A DEATH-ROLL.

On March 27, 1889, a long and great career came to a close. John Bright died at Rochdale, after an illness which lasted some time. He now seemed to get better, and now seemed to get worse, and his friends were kept—and he had friends and admirers all over the world—in constant anxiety. The end came as we have said. John Bright was born in 1811, and was seventy-eight years old when he died. Despite his failing health of later years he did not seem to look his age. His broad brow and noble head appeared to carry with them a suggestion of untiring activity. But it was certain that of later years his eloquence in the House of Commons and on the platform had not been quite what it was; and, indeed, those who heard John Bright only during these later years did not know what the man's eloquence really was. Bright belonged to a Quaker family of the manufacturing class. He was not what could be properly called a self-made man, except in the general sense that every man is self-made, for he was always a man of considerable wealth, and a partner in a great and successful manufacturing house. But he was to a

certain extent a self-educated man. He never attended a public school or belonged to any university. Still, his education, such as it was, has been underrated rather than overrated. He knew little Latin, and less Greek, to be sure, but he could read French and speak it fairly well, had educated himself on the English of the Bible translation, and he was an enraptured devotee of Milton. It is curious, too, that with all his reverence for Milton—and only those who knew him well could know how deep that reverence was—he never followed Milton's Latinised style. He always spoke the plainest and the purest Anglo-Saxon English. There can be no simpler and finer English found than in some of the great speeches of John Bright. His literary tastes were undoubtedly narrow in their reach. He had no very cordial appreciation of Shakspeare. His early Puritanical training kept him in revolt against free speaking on many subjects where morality was concerned, and Iago and Iachimo were to him simply loathsome creatures. Even Spenser, the purest-minded of poets, repelled him by his frank outspokenness. From his first entrance into public life Bright devoted himself absolutely to every great cause which he believed to be just. A more unselfish man never lived. He shrank modestly from being known as a philanthropist, and it is quite certain that he employed an agent privately to bestow liberally on deserving charities about which his own name never came into print. He made many political enemies because of his earnest and strenuous nature, and because of the crushing power

which he often brought to bear against the policy of his Parliamentary opponents. He was probably the greatest orator of our time in the House of Commons. As a debater he could not compare with Mr. Gladstone, but on a great occasion, when he threw his whole soul into the question, he rose to a loftier height of eloquence than even Mr. Gladstone ever did. Then, he had all the attributes of an orator. He had the commanding presence. He had the marvellous voice, thrilling with every variety of intonation. He had the rich, genial humour, which even in its sarcasm never 'carried a heart-stain away on its blade,' and he had the simplicity of style in which every word strikes its own note and tells its own tale.

The news of his death became, as was but natural, the occasion of a great demonstration of sympathy and regret in the House of Commons. It is gratifying to know that the Irish Nationalist members joined in this demonstration. Mr. Bright, as we have already seen, had withdrawn altogether from the Home Rule policy of Mr. Gladstone. Still, when the House of Commons came to pass its eulogy upon Mr. Bright's career, the Irish Nationalist members, through their spokesman, declared that Irish memory was not so short as to forget the days when John Bright stood forth as Ireland's greatest champion in English public life. In the Congress of the United States the warmest tributes were paid to his memory and to his services. John Bright had stood by the cause of the Federal Government of America even in the very darkest

days, and when all that was classified as society in England was on the other side. Bright found a principle at issue in the American war, and he clung to it and cleaved to it. He used to be accused very commonly at one time of being an anti-English Englishman, of trying to 'Americanise our institutions,' of being what would now be called a 'Little Englander.' John Bright, in truth, was one of the most perfect types of the highest order of Englishmen. He loved his country with the love of a patriot, but he wished that his country should always be just, be on the right side, be noble, and be true to herself. He hated war in general, as was but natural in a man of his Quaker family. But he was never a man to shrink from a war which he believed to be necessary and just. He had not much of sentimentalism about him, and perhaps he chilled some people by refusing to throw himself into the passion of the doctrine of nationalities on the European continent which the Emperor Napoleon III. had brought into active existence and operation. In truth, Bright's general principle was that a nation has nearly enough to do in minding its own business and looking after its own people. But he had shown again and again, as he showed in the case of the American Civil War, that his full sympathies could go with the success of any great cause, no matter what sacrifice the struggle might impose. He cared little or nothing about extension of territory, and the Jingo adventurer could never have obtained any manner of sympathy or support from him. He loved the English working-

classes and the poor in general, but he never played, if we may use the expression, to the gallery of the working classes, or spoke as if the so-called working classes made up the whole of the best life of Great Britain. Indeed, he was at one time, curiously enough, rather opposed to the idea of having special representatives of the working classes in the House of Commons. He assented to the idea only on the ground that the railway interests were represented there, that the banking interests were represented there, that the army and navy were represented there, and that, therefore, the working classes had as good a right to representation as any other body of men. But his own idea would have been, no doubt, that men should be elected to the House of Commons on their own merits and for their own public services, and without reference to class or order, a state of things which it will take, we should think, the evolution of long ages to bring about. The very idea of such a state of things showed a power of hopeful imagination in Bright such as even his friends did not commonly give him credit for. With all his practical nature and his rigorous appreciation of facts, there was a dash of the poetic about him, which helped him to be not merely the orator he was, but also the great and noble citizen he was. His life was simple; he had no ambition but the ambition to do good, and his figure will stand out like a great statue through succeeding generations of English public life.

On December 12, 1889, a bright star fell from

the firmament of English literature. On that day Robert Browning died at the age of seventy-seven. We have spoken of Browning as a poet in these volumes already, and need not again go over his claims to rank among great poets. Indeed, he is one of the immortals whose place is absolutely settled, and with whom criticism, as such, has no more to do than it has to do with the height of a mountain or the depth of a lake. But something may be said about Robert Browning himself. There was nothing whatever of the professional poet in his manner in private or his bearing in society. He never went about with his singing-robes on. If it were possible to suppose that one did not know who he was, one might have met Browning again and again without having the faintest idea that he was meeting a great poet. There was nothing eccentric about him; there was nothing distant. He was never in the clouds so far as society was concerned, although as a poet he was undoubtedly very much in the clouds and over the heads of some of the people who tried to make-believe that they appreciated him and understood him. In private life he was at once a brilliant and an easy talker and a most delightful companion. He was a talker who loved to listen as well as to talk. He never oppressed one with any sense of his gift of talking, but, on the other hand, he made an impression on those who came near him which never left them. The writer of this book, for example, can never forget the effect produced on him by Browning's quiet description of the acting of

Edmund Kean, perhaps, on the whole, the greatest actor the English stage has ever had. Nothing that this writer had ever heard or read came near to the realism of the impression made by Browning's easy, enraptured description. Browning was a man who took an interest, if it may be put so, in everything. Other great poets have wrapped themselves up in the glory or the mysticism of their poetry, and have been content to sit on their imaginary Parnassian heights and let the world go by as it would. But to Robert Browning everything of human interest had a close interest for him. He used to go out of his way to encourage any new and obscure author in whom he discovered any qualities deserving of success. There are numbers of us still living and writing who can never forget a kindly message from Robert Browning at a time when they were to him personally quite unknown. The world recognised him but slowly; for it must be owned that his was not a style which one who runs can read, or at least can understand. But the world came to him in time, and with abundance of appreciation and of praise. He himself sometimes spoke with quiet cheerfulness about the long struggle he had had to make the public of these countries understand him. 'O! British public,' he wrote in one of his poems, 'Ye who love me not!' and then, later on, 'O British public! who may love me yet. Marry and amen.' The British public came to love him at last. Towards the close of his career it became an affectation among many English people to declare that they

had always admired Browning from the very beginning, and that they understood him perfectly well when other people declared that they found him absolutely unintelligible. Browning himself saw this quite clearly, and was good-humouredly amused at it. Perhaps no less self-conceited poet ever lived. Perhaps, too, no poet ever lived who did his work more seriously and more earnestly, and who waited more patiently for its success. During his poetical career he had really only one great rival—Lord Tennyson; and it depends much on one's temperament whether he more admires Lord Tennyson or Robert Browning. Indeed, all such comparisons may be properly accounted odious; but there are, of course, levels of height for poetry as for everything else. It would be only reasonable to say, that during the lifetime of the two poets they stood on an elevation distinctly above the crowd of contemporary singers.

A striking and in many ways a splendid figure passed from the world when Sir Richard Burton died on October 20, 1890. He was one of the greatest Eastern travellers and explorers known to our time. Probably no other Englishman of his day knew Eastern races and Eastern languages nearly as well as he did. He was a man of absolute daring, to whom the idea of physical fear never occurred. In his younger days he showed just like the man he was: dark-haired with burning dark eyes, and all the outward presentment of an adventurer in the highest sense of the word. In the lower sense of the

word he was not an adventurer at all. He had no passion to make money, and no passion even to make fame. He loved adventure and change of scene, and he loved the danger that made his blood tingle in his veins. In his later years he softened down a good deal, and put away the kind of aggressiveness and self-assertion with which people at one time found fault. He became curiously modest in his assertion of knowledge about Eastern languages and affairs, and a common saying on his lips was, if you asked some question, 'I don't know,' 'I'm not quite sure,' 'Somebody else'—and he would mention a name or two—'could tell you much better than I could do.' At one time, it is believed, he actually became a Mussulman, merely, no doubt, because he was so much in sympathy with everything Eastern. The Orient had a fascination and a magic for him. He appeared now and again in London society, and he charmed people who in his former days had been taken by his aggressiveness, and in later days were taken by his quietude and reserve. The death in the same year of Mrs. Booth, wife of General Booth of the Salvation Army, well deserves a record here. She was the right hand of her husband in his work; she had more than 30,000 women as commissioned officers under her in the Salvation Army.

Lord Tennyson did not linger very long after Browning's death. He died on October 6, 1892, at the age of eighty-three. In his case, as in that of Browning also, some of the most beautiful and touching

lines he ever wrote became his sweet farewell to earth. Tennyson was not, like Browning, a man fond of society and social life. He loved his friends, and he was a most genial host to those whom he cared to see. But he was somewhat eccentric in his ways, and he had about him much more of what we have ventured to call the professional poet than Robert Browning ever had. He sometimes alarmed people by a portentous solemnity, which was never shown to those who came within the reach of his intimacy or friendship. Those who knew him well declared that there was not in his real nature the slightest taint of affectation. But to the outer world he always seemed a poet wrapt up in his cloud of poetry, and who had nothing to do with the idle and commonplace persons who could write no poems of their own, or, at all events, could write no poems that were worth reading. Probably a certain shyness and shrinking from commonplace intercourse accounted for what many people thought a chilling peculiarity in Tennyson's manner. It is a curious fact that Tennyson, who had the genius to convey his lofty thoughts, his most far-reaching stretches of imagination, in melodious language that a child could understand, should have been so difficult to be understood himself as a man; while Robert Browning, whose own best admirers sometimes professed to find a certain difficulty in comprehending all his meaning, should have been the most genial and gracious and easily comprehended man in the world. There was no man or woman with whom Browning could not have

talked on terms of ease, familiarity and sympathy. There were many men and women, devoted admirers of Tennyson, with whom Tennyson would have found it difficult to exchange half a dozen sentences. The contrast between the two poets and the two men will probably give a curious subject for literary discussion later on. But as to the rank of the two men there can hardly be any literary discussion at all. Between them they maintained the position of the poetry of the Victorian age. Tennyson inherited the Laureateship from Wordsworth, and no one can doubt that he was Wordsworth's natural successor. The English tongue has never been made more melodious than by Tennyson. Its exquisite variances of expression have never been more delightfully brought out than by him. Some of his poems which are the most popular do not seem to us to do justice to his gifts of imagination or of poetic expression. The thoughts of 'Clara Vere de Vere' are commonplace enough, and 'The Queen of the May' is cheap in sentiment, and Lady Godiva's sacrifice does not seem to amount to much. But Tennyson created anew King Arthur and his knights, and as long as human feeling remains eyes will be moistened and hearts will be lifted over the love and pathos of 'In Memoriam.' The mere songs scattered through some of Tennyson's poems might each of them have made a fame. The wonder is how so much tenderness and pathos and beauty could have been compressed into lines so few. Tennyson would be a great English poet if he had written only those verses and nothing else.

For a long time after the death of Lord Tennyson the office, if it may be called so, of Poet Laureate was left unfilled. There was an impression among many people, a hope among many others, that the place of Poet Laureate was not to be restored. It is hardly a place that belongs to modern times. We have outgrown the days of the chief bard of the king. Still, there is many an institution which everybody would be glad to keep up for the mere sake of its historic and traditional interest and significance, if nothing particular came in the way. But it is not always easy to fill the place of a really great Poet Laureate, and this is just what happened when Tennyson came to die. Browning was dead—so was Matthew Arnold. There were two men who, so far as real poetic merit was concerned, might have been put in the place without any grotesque or painful suggestion of anti-climax—for no one could expect to have always a Tennyson succeeding a Wordsworth. These two men were Mr. Swinburne and Mr. William Morris—Mr. Morris, who has since died. It would have been obviously impossible to offer the position to Mr. Swinburne. Many of his poems, even of his later poems, were not such as the Queen could possibly be expected to sanction with her official approval. On the other hand, it was quite certain that Mr. Morris would never accept the offer of the place, if it were made to him. Mr. Morris was a strongly convinced Socialist in many ways, and he had about him a sort of rugged independence which would have in all probability regarded the Laureateship as some-

thing like the position of a liveried menial—a court flunkey. Nothing could be more sweet and gentle, and delicate and touching than most of his poems; but the man himself had just that sort of independence of which Robert Burns boasted. These two men, who had in the artistic sense absolutely no rivals left, were practically out of the question, and there were no men who could well be compared with them. Some critics suggested Sir Lewis Morris, author of 'The Epic of Hades,' and some, again, pointed to Sir Edwin Arnold, who had hymned in stately and mellifluous verse 'The Light of Asia.' Just at the moment it so happened that there were several young poets newly bursting into blossom whose poetical faculty seemed rich in promise; but it is only fair to say that none of them had at that time given full assurance of a claim to a commanding position. It is quite certain that a sovereign or a prime minister must not experiment in a Poet Laureate. Therefore, not unnaturally, all the younger men were passed by, and the choice of the Conservative Government lighted on Mr. Alfred Austin, a fairly distinguished man of letters, no longer young, who had written much verse and various leading articles; who had done, not without success, much work as a foreign correspondent; who was known everywhere in London society, and was liked by everyone who knew him. Still, the appointment came as a surprise upon the outer world, although in some of the inner circles it had long been said that if Lord Salisbury came back to office he would advise the appointment of Mr.

Austin to the position of Poet Laureate. Of course there was any amount of adverse criticism. Mr. Austin was the man most to be pitied throughout the whole time of controversy. Everyone had seemed disposed to give him credit for some poetic merits before, but from the moment when he was formally announced as Poet Laureate it would appear as if, in Shakespearian phrase, 'the sense ached' at him. He did not deserve the position of Poet Laureate, but neither did he deserve all the disparagement which his appointment brought on him. Not all Poets Laureate have been great poets. The pity was that the chair should not have been left vacant, at all events until the coming of more favourable times.

The early days of January 1892 were darkened for the Royal Family, and, indeed, for all the subjects of the Queen, by the premature death of the Duke of Clarence. The Duke of Clarence was the eldest son of the Prince and Princess of Wales, and stood, therefore, in the direct line of succession to the throne. He was born on January 8, 1864. His birth was premature, and he never became robust in health. He was sent, with his younger brother, Prince George, into the navy, and both princes became midshipmen, and made many a long cruise. The Duke of Clarence, then Prince Albert Victor Edward, familiarly known as 'Prince Eddie,' studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, and then went into the army in 1885. In May 1890 he was raised to the peerage under the title of Duke of Clarence and Avondale, and was a very regular attendant at the debates in the House of

Lords. His premature death was made especially pathetic by the fact that only a few weeks before his marriage engagement to his cousin, the Princess Victoria May of Teck, was authoritatively announced in the newspapers. Suddenly it was made known that he had caught cold, and then that he had become a victim to the epidemic of influenza, which that year was taking a terrible grip of many people in these countries. At first there was no thought of his being in mortal danger; but he had not physical or constitutional strength enough to fight against the attack, and on January 14, some six weeks after his betrothal, his young life came to an end. It is no exaggeration to say that an intense sympathy with the Royal Family was felt all over the civilised and a great part of the uncivilised world.

On the selfsame day a long and a great career came to an end. Early on January 14, Cardinal Manning died at Archbishop's House, Westminster. Cardinal Manning was born in 1808, and was educated at a private school and at Harrow, and afterwards at Balliol College, Oxford. Everyone knows the part that he played in the history of the Church of England, and afterwards in the history of the Church of Rome. He became a clergyman of the Church of England, and he rose in 1840 to be Archdeacon of Chichester. He was soon after absorbed in the movement which was led by John Henry Newman, and although he held aloof for a considerable time from an actual secession from the Church of England, it was thought by most observers that he would be sure

to follow Newman before long. The once famous Gorham case gave an impulse to his action. The Gorham case was a controversy about the refusal of the Bishop of Exeter to institute the Rev. Mr. Gorham to the vicarage of Brampford Speke, on the ground that Mr. Gorham had published unorthodox opinions concerning baptismal regeneration. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council decided that the opinions held by Mr. Gorham were not contrary to the declared doctrine of the Church of England. This decision, against which Manning protested in a public pamphlet, decided his course of action. He said to himself, if the law courts are to settle questions of Church doctrine definitely and finally for us, it simply follows that we have no Church at all. If the legal judges are to be the interpreters of the Scriptures for us—the judges, who may, if they like, be sceptics or be atheists, then it is more clear than ever that we have no Church at all. But then he went on to argue with himself: 'I cannot believe that man was left by the Creator without some authority to interpret His teaching in the form of a Church, and I cannot believe that the English legal authorities can constitute that Church.' Therefore he looked out for a Church, and he found it in the Church of Rome. We are not now discussing the reasons or the justification for his change of faith, but are only concerned to set forth the reasons why he did change his faith. He passed over, as Newman had done, into the ranks of the Roman Catholic Church, and he was received as a priest in

1851. He rose very high in the Roman Catholic Church, and he ended by becoming Archbishop of Westminster, and was raised to the dignity of cardinal. He came to hold a great position in all that part of the public and social life in England which is concerned with the welfare of the working classes and with the poor. Mr. Disraeli, in his novel 'Lothair,' has drawn a very lifelike picture of Cardinal Manning under the name of 'Cardinal Grandison,' and has well described his manners, at once stately and sweet, his perfect ease in the best society, and his unobtrusive abstemiousness from any of what are supposed to be the pleasures of the dinner-table. Cardinal Manning at one time dined out a great deal, and was a welcome guest everywhere. But he was devoted to the principles of total abstinence from any manner of intoxicating drink, although he never obtruded or even sought to enforce his doctrines on those who met him in society or who came to him in his own house. He founded an institution called the League of the Cross in London, for the purpose of spreading the principles of total abstinence, and he accomplished in England something very much like the work which Father Mathew had achieved in Ireland. He took an engrossing interest in all that concerned the welfare of the working man. No one was ever more popular among the working people of London and the great English cities than Cardinal Manning. Working men who had no sympathy whatever with his Catholic doctrine, working men who cared little or

nothing for the teaching of any Church, were enthusiastic about him because of the unsparing zeal with which he gave himself up to any movement which could tend to the benefit of the toilers and of the poor. A great London newspaper, which was entirely out of sympathy with Cardinal Manning's religious principles, declared at a severe industrial crisis in London that Manning had really made himself the Primate of all England. His home, 'Archbishop's House, Westminster,' was poorly and barely furnished—the home, indeed, of an anchorite. He lived and died poor. He gave away and he bequeathed what money he got to charities. He received everybody who came to see him, and, unless when there was a special appointment, he received them according to the order of their coming. A London working man told the writer of this book, that during the great dock strike of 1889 he particularly wished to have a few words of consultation with Cardinal Manning, who was actively engaged in an effort to reconcile the toilers and the employers. The working man rang the bell at the Cardinal's door, and before the door was opened a carriage drove up, and a great English Catholic nobleman got out. When the door was opened, the priest in attendance saw that the working man had come first, and the Duke had come second. So the working man got the first hearing, and the Duke had to wait for his turn. The incident was not much, perhaps. It ought to have been the same thing everywhere; but none the less it impressed the

London working man. It had not come within his experience, or even into his imagination, that there might be a great prince of the Church who would give a working man a first hearing, and allow a Duke to wait while the working man was being heard. This incident illustrates clearly enough the impression which Cardinal Manning made upon the working classes of England, and especially of London. His simple, quiet, sweet manner seemed not alone to level, but to ignore, all distinctions of rank or class. His death, which must have come soon in any case, for he was an old man, was perhaps hastened for a few days or a few hours by his rigid devotion to his principle of total abstinence. He absolutely refused to take any medicine which had an infusion of wine, or brandy, or alcoholic stimulant of any kind. He knew that the end was coming, and he deliberately refused to think that a few hours or even a few days of longer living would be worth the surrender of his conscientious convictions. Cardinal Manning had been married, but his wife was dead before he entered the Roman Catholic Church. His daughter lived for many years after that event, but she died long before the death of her father. Since Manning's death a storm of controversy has been raging around a biography of him written by one who claimed, whether rightly or wrongly, to be in his confidence and to have his authority. There can be no doubt that Cardinal Manning differed on many questions as to the discipline of his Church from Cardinal Newman, and from other great men belonging to the Catholic

faith. But no biographer and no biography can ever damage the fame of Cardinal Manning, any more than such biographer or biography could damage the fame of Pascal, or of Fénélon, as an illustrious Catholic and Christian.

The last day of the month of January saw the end of a man hardly less remarkable in his way, and hardly less influential in his own peculiar field, than Cardinal Manning—the great Baptist minister and pulpit orator, the Reverend Charles Spurgeon. Mr. Spurgeon was born in 1834, in the county of Essex, where his forefathers had long been settled. They were, however, of Dutch extraction, and some of them were Quakers. Charles Spurgeon took to preaching almost from his boyhood. He became a member of the Baptist body, and while still very young was accepted as the pastor of a small Baptist ministry, where he soon began to be popular, and even distinguished, as the 'boy-preacher.' Later on, while he was still under age, he was invited to become a minister to a Baptist chapel on the South-side of London. From this time his fame began to grow and grow, and in a few years his Southwark Baptist Chapel was absolutely unable to contain anything like the crowds that thronged to hear the popular preacher. The congregation for a long time could find no place but Exeter Hall large enough for their religious celebrations. Even Exeter Hall had not space to hold the thousands and thousands of persons who tried to get in every Sunday in order to hear Mr. Spurgeon preach. People of all ranks and

classes, of all religious denominations, and of no religious denomination whatever, made for Exeter Hall Sunday after Sunday in the hope of securing admission. It became the fashion to hear Mr. Spurgeon, and not to have heard him argued one's self out of the movement of public life. Great statesmen and Parliamentary orators rushed to listen to him, and public opinion, of course, became greatly divided as to his eloquence. People ran into wild extremes about him. Some insisted that he was the greatest pulpit orator who had ever been heard in England, or, indeed, anywhere else. Others as stoutly argued that he was nothing but a windbag and a loud-voiced charlatan. On one point all had to agree—that Spurgeon had a magnificent voice, a fine dramatic gesticulation, and a style which rose from conversational simplicity to an impassioned and a thrilling rhetoric. He had come into the pulpit determined to be heard—determined to be heard because, as he said himself, he had a message to deliver, and deliver it he would. He knew perfectly well the importance of getting himself talked about as soon as possible. He once told a friend that he was determined to attract attention, and that if there were no other way of securing his object he would have worn a soldier's red coat when he got into the pulpit. This, it should be understood, was not in the least because Spurgeon cared about notoriety for its own sake. He had no personal desire to be known by the public. It was because notoriety, even through eccentricity, was of value to him as a means of attract-

ing an audience. All sorts of ridiculous anecdotes, most of them absolutely without foundation, were commonly told of the efforts he made to startle his audiences into attention. He very soon found that he needed nothing but his own eloquence to gather a crowd around him wherever he went.

A chance and a calamity assisted Mr. Spurgeon in his purpose. The Surrey Music-hall was taken for some of his Sunday discourses. One day a sudden and false alarm of fire was raised while Mr. Spurgeon was preaching, and a number of people were crushed to death in their wild rush for the doors in order to escape. If anything had been wanting to draw attention to Mr. Spurgeon's preaching, this panic-born calamity would have done the work. After that his congregation built for him the Tabernacle, as it was called, on the Surrey side of London, a building which could hold 5,500 persons. Mr. Spurgeon was undoubtedly a great minister of the poor as well as a great public orator. He led a noble life of self-denial; if, indeed, that could fitly be called a life of self-denial which was absolutely given up to the very work dearest to Mr. Spurgeon's own heart. Large sums of money came to him by bequest and by presentation, and he employed them all in the interest of those to whom he had devoted himself and his calling. He lived a simple, modest, quiet life, like that of any humbler worker in the cause of religious ministration. He suffered much in his later years from gout and rheumatism, probably brought on by

overwork, by disregard of his own health, and by a singularly abstemious course of life. He died at Mentone, at the comparatively early age of fifty-eight. During his long illness he received frequent messages of sympathy from the Queen, from the Prince and Princess of Wales, from Mr. Gladstone, from most of the archbishops and bishops of the Church of England, and from Cardinal Manning. Men of all faiths, and many men of no faith at all, united in regarding him as a devoted worker for religion and for the interests of the lowly and the poor. He was a fierce controversialist. He was 'ever a fighter,' like Robert Browning's hero, and he sometimes quarrelled even with leading teachers of his own denomination. But no one ever doubted his truth, his integrity, his unselfishness, and his sincere and passionate desire to do good. Therefore general sorrow was felt all over the country and amongst all English-speaking peoples when the news came that his task was done, and that his life had reached a premature end.

An attempt has been made already in these volumes to describe the peculiar and almost unique position which Professor Freeman held in historic literature. Here we can do little more than record his death. He died at Alicante, in Spain, on March 16, 1892. He had been settled in Oxford for some years, having been appointed Regius Professor of History in that university in succession to Dr. Stubbs. His health for some time had not been good, and he was fond of spending his winter holidays in the delightful

climate of Sicily. He was a man of a tremendous mental energy, and he was an advanced reformer in the truest sense of the word. Every cause which concerned the welfare of humanity had his strenuous support. There was a common impression among the general public that Professor Freeman was a man of rough, arrogant, and overbearing manners. The writer of this History can only say that he never found anything rough, arrogant, or overbearing in Professor Freeman's demeanour. Freeman was thought by some people to be a man who had little regard for the growth of his country's empire, but as a matter of fact he had a regard above all other political desires for the reputation and the honour of his country. He was once engaged in controversy in Oxford as to the lending out of books for the students from one of the great libraries. He was in favour of a judicious liberality in such a matter. 'A book,' he said to an acquaintance, 'is to some men a fetish. To me it is a working instrument.' Thus it was with him in his studies and in his life. He allowed no opinion to be with him a fetish, and, on the other hand, he recognised every opinion as a possible working instrument. He was emphatically a strong man, and his name will probably grow steadily with the growth of historical literature.

The death of Ford Madox Brown, which took place on October 6, 1893, deprived English art not only of a great painter, but of a great artistic influence. Mr. Madox Brown is commonly spoken of as the

founder of the Pre-Raphaelite school of painting in England. But nothing certainly could have been farther from the mind of Madox Brown than the idea of forming or founding a school of any kind. No painter who ever lived had a more sturdy belief in the right of every artist to do the best he could of his own independent inspiration, and to trust all the rest to its result. But as it happened he came in just before the time when the so-called Pre-Raphaelite movement was started, and undoubtedly it caught much of its inspiration from him. He was born in Calais of an English father and mother, and got all his early education in France and Italy. He sent two cartoons to an exhibition in Westminster Hall in 1845, and his genius was not recognised by the public at large, although Haydon in his diary speaks of Madox Brown's fresco as 'the finest specimen of that difficult art in the Hall.' It is very doubtful, indeed, whether Madox Brown ever won his full meed of praise from the English public. Certainly he never won it from the London public. But in Manchester and Liverpool and Glasgow, where there is a passion for art, which we in London cannot pretend to have, his paintings, like those of his friend, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, had an immense success. He was engaged for seven years in painting a series of historical pictures for the Manchester Town Hall, and he spent all that time in Manchester, steadily doing his work and patiently waiting for the approval of time. Ford Madox Brown was unlike many, if not most, other artists, if we may use the word in the narrow and the

conventional sense. The artist in that sense is generally more or less withdrawn from any interest in the common affairs that trouble human beings. 'Art for art's sake' was the motto at one time of a certain school of French painters and sculptors and poets. The meaning, so far as any meaning could be put into the phrase at all, was that no artist had any need to trouble himself about anything but the reality and the success of his picture, or his poem, or his statue. We do not say that there is anything ignoble about this doctrine. It pledged the man to do the very best work he could in the craft for which he laboured. George Eliot's hero, Adam Bede, who is a carpenter by trade, declares that for him the will of God is to do good carpentering. One can quite understand a doctrine of that kind, but it did not satisfy the large and sympathetic mind of Ford Madox Brown. To him it was inconceivable that a painter or a sculptor, as such, should withdraw himself from continual interest in the processes of human movements. Nothing was ever done during his time in the cause of humanity but Ford Madox Brown's heart warmed to it, and it had his actual and his cordial assistance. Nobody could better have loved the human race than he, or done more faithfully all that he possibly could do to lighten the load of the heavily laden. There was no great cause or great movement at home or abroad which had not his sympathy, and, so far as he could give it, his helping hand. The man himself was greater than his works, and it is well that the English public should know the fact, and prize him

accordingly. He had suffered much in life. He had one great suffering in the death of his son Oliver Madox Brown, who died in his youth. That was indeed a most promising youth. Oliver Madox Brown had had a picture hung on the line in the Royal Academy in his eighteenth year, and had written a novel, called 'Gabriel Denver,' which made the whole English reading public believe that a great new novelist was coming into literature. If anything could make some of us doubt the truth of Carlyle's saying, that there is nothing in the might-have-been, and that nothing ever can be but simply and absolutely what it is, it would possibly be the untimely death of Oliver Madox Brown. The present writer certainly can remember in his time no other example of premature promise so great and so prematurely marred. Ford Madox Brown lived on for many years after this fatal bereavement, and never let go his hold on the active interests of life. Its work did not cease for him, nor his concern in the fates and fortunes of other men. He was in truth a great Englishman, and an Englishman with whom the honour and the real dignity of his country counted for far more than her territorial aggrandisement. He was in many ways, apart even from his artistic power, a typical Englishman of the noblest kind. He wanted England above all things to be just and to fear not. That would have been his pride in his country, and the country could hardly have, in that sense, a nobler citizen. In an earlier volume we have spoken of Professor Tyndall and the conspicuous position which he came to hold in the philosophic science of his day. The

years that elapsed between that time and the announcement of his death had cooled much of the controversy which once flamed around him and his teaching, but had not diminished the attractiveness or the fame of his writings and discourses; it has been said, indeed, that he was not so much a great scientific man as a brilliant writer and lecturer on scientific subjects. In other words, it has been argued that he added nothing to science, but merely illustrated it. Even if the criticism was just, his task would have been a great one, accomplished as he accomplished it. He died on December 4, 1893, at the age of seventy-three.

In the following year, on October 20, 1894, Mr. James Anthony Froude passed from the living world and became a memory—a memory which is not likely to fade while Englishmen read books. We have given our views at some length already as to Mr. Froude's marvellous gifts, and the position which he is likely to hold among historians. In one of the many controversies which his later works stirred up, it was said by an unfavouring critic, that he might have been set down as a great romancist who had missed his way if he had not unluckily written an avowed romance. Mr. Froude was in private life one of the most genial of men. A delightful talker, a sympathetic companion, a man of far broader views than some of the readers of his historical works might have taken him to be. He had, indeed, a certain good humoured contempt for writers and teachers who made their own tenets a sort of test of friendship. He was unspoiled by fame, and even

unspoiled by controversy. He died at the age of seventy-six, and must, one would think, have thoroughly enjoyed life during most of that time, for the very controversies in which he was so often engaged were to him but as inspiriting stimulants. He can hardly be described as a great historian, but he was surely a great writer, a great literary man.

In this season, so sadly marked by the death of eminent men, we must not fail to include that of Professor William Robertson Smith, who died on March 31, 1894. Professor Smith was a great Oriental scholar and a great writer on Biblical and Historical subjects, and was associated with Professor Baynes in editing the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' to which he had been a contributor. He succeeded to the professorship of Arabic in Cambridge University, made vacant by the death of Professor Palmer, whose sad story has already been told in this volume. Professor Robertson Smith died in the forty-ninth year of his age.

The whole reading world felt a shock at the news that Robert Louis Stevenson was dead. He died on December 3, 1894. The death, indeed, was not unexpected, because Stevenson had long been in delicate and sinking health, and everyone knew that he was not likely, as the Celtic phrase goes, 'to comb a grey head.' He had had to leave Europe altogether, and was settled in one of the South Pacific Islands, where the soft and exquisite climate, the mild, ever-enduring summer, and the perfectly clear atmosphere, gave him the best chance that the world could give of a prolonged existence. All these chances failed him in the end, and he died at the age of forty-four.

He had endeared himself to the whole of the reading public of English-speaking countries. Perhaps since the great days of Dickens, and Thackeray, and George Eliot, and Charlotte Brontë, there was no novelist more popular in England. Indeed, at one time he got about him, certainly without any effort of his own, a school of enthusiasts and adorers who were prepared to put his name above that of any English novelist, living or dead. There were impassioned young writers who clamoured that some of his novels were beyond any ever written by Sir Walter Scott. All this, of course, was absurd; but a man must have real genius in him who can create such a school of idolatry. There can be no doubt that many men and women of less rapturous and hyperbolic temperament were sometimes inclined to question Stevenson's merits, merely because of the wild trumpeting and drum-beating of his adorers. But Stevenson, judged impartially by his own work, was undoubtedly one of the greatest English writers during the later part of the nineteenth century. He stole quietly into the world of fame. Most of us heard of him, for the first time, a great many years ago, when a remarkable story, a short story, appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*, called 'The Pavilion on the Links,' and signed with the initials 'R. L. S.' None of us then had the least idea as to the identity of the writer of the story, but some of us, at all events, felt satisfied that a new and fresh power had arisen in English literature. All the rest of his career is, of course, the common possession of the reading public. He revived in 'Treasure Island' something that might

be called the literature of Defoe, and in 'The Master of Ballantrae' he gave back to us the method of Walter Scott. But he was no imitator of Defoe or of Walter Scott. His work was always essentially his own, sprang from his own inspiration, and was carried out by his own mode of treatment. In the minds of many persons—of those, possibly, who have passed the romantic and the heroic days—his essays were still better than his novels. Some of us, who cannot admit for a moment that his novels were equal to those of Walter Scott, are quite willing to allow that his essays are equal to those of Charles Lamb or of François Coppée. Some of his studies of Edinburgh are perfectly captivating, at once by their realism and by their poetic beauty. After his death it was proposed that there should be a public monument raised to him in this country. The original suggestion was made by Lord Rosebery, and, strange to say, some objection was started to it by a countryman of Stevenson and of Lord Rosebery. Better wait, it was urged, and see whether Stevenson's fame will hold out. This as a piece of advice was sensible enough. Monuments raised in a moment of national emotion are often apt to become unmeaning fabrics in course of time. Even a well-educated Englishman wandering about London to-day is sometimes apt to wonder, if he raises his eyes and looks at the things at all, who were the persons to whom this or that public monument was erected. It has been well said, that if a man's fame needs a monument to preserve it, then he ought to have no monument at all. But in the case of Robert Louis Stevenson it

surely might have been clear to any reasonable person that his was a literary fame which must endure, monument or no monument. The idea is not that we, the public, should erect a monument to a man who has captivated and controlled us by his genius in order that we may tell posterity that there once was such a man, but in order to express our grateful appreciation of the man's genius and of his work. The monument to Sir Walter Scott in Edinburgh, the monument to Robert Burns in Ayr, were never put up with the foolish notion that by such erections, and by such erections only, could the memory of the men be perpetuated. The monuments were simply the tribute of gratitude from the living to the dead. They were designed as an *immortelle* is cast upon some great man's grave. Nobody supposes that the *immortelle* will prolong the great man's fame: it only testifies to other men's admiration, homage, and gratitude. In this sense, of course, a monument was due, and is due, to Robert Louis Stevenson. Hyperbolical admiration apart, it cannot be doubted that he started a new chapter, or at least that he revived an old and brilliant chapter, of English fiction. He will probably rank in time, not with the very best, but immediately after the very best. He created situations rather than characters, but when he set about drawing a character, he drew with the firm and steady hand of a master. There was nothing oblique or vague about him. What he saw he saw, and what he saw he could describe. If that is not to be an artist, then we, at least, have no idea of what an artist is.

CHAPTER XV.

HOME RULE WITHOUT PARNELL.

MEANWHILE the difficulty of the Conservative Government at last came to be that it had no positive and distinct policy to offer to the country. So far as one could see, the departments were managed well enough; but the interest of the country is not to be caught and kept up by a mechanical skill in the mere routine of administration. There were three or four great questions absorbing the attention of the public in general, and on these the Government had practically nothing to say. It began to be quite clear that there must be a new appeal to the country by the means of a general election. The sand-glass of the Tory Administration had obviously run down. The Parliament itself, like the too familiar giant of classical story, had to touch the ground in order to get new strength. The Irish Nationalists and Irish Catholics were determined to oppose to the uttermost the Education Bill for Ireland which had been introduced by the Government—a question stiff with difficulty then and since. On June 28, 1892, Parliament was prorogued, the sentence of dissolution was

passed, and the preparations for a general election were begun.

Mr. John Morley was the first statesman who had held Cabinet rank to announce the policy of the Liberal party. In his address he said: 'It will still manifestly be my duty first and foremost to aid in prosecuting the great cause of the better government of Ireland to such an issue as shall relieve the Imperial Parliament from a distracting and a now obstructive burden, and at the same time shall enlist the capacity and energy of Irishmen in the orderly government of their own country.' Mr. Morley pointed out that 'the only alternative which Parliament had been able to devise to Home Rule is perpetual coercion as a permanent instrument of government.' Mr. Morley insisted that 'this abrogation of the civil rights and constitutional securities of Irishmen, this establishment of an odious inequality between the people of Ireland and the people of Great Britain, in spite of the most solemn pledges of perfect equality, both at the Treaty of Union and on many occasions since, makes it more than ever the bounden duty of Liberals to renew the strong effort which they made six years ago to satisfy the constitutional demands of the great majority of Irishmen.' The principal other measures which Mr. Morley recommended—and, of course, in his recommendation he carried with him the authority of his colleagues—were a Local Option Bill, a bill for the establishment of parish councils, a bill for giving greater powers to the London County Council, an

inquiry into the working of the poor-law, a reform in the laws relating to land tenure and to electoral arrangements, and the disestablishment of the State Church in Scotland and in Wales. Mr. Chamberlain followed with his address almost immediately afterwards. Mr. Chamberlain reminded his constituents that in 1886 he had undertaken to do all in his power to maintain the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland, and to resist any measure or scheme which tended to put the loyal and Protestant minority in Ireland under the control of the National League. He expressed a hope that the Local Government Bill—the passing of which, he said, had been delayed by the threatened obstruction of the Gladstonian and Home Rule party—might become law in the next Parliament. 'The issues,' he said, 'are the greatest which can be submitted to any people, and I trust that in this great crisis Birmingham will once more lead the way, and will give her united voice against a policy which would be dishonouring to England, dangerous to Ireland, and destructive to all hopes of Liberal progress.'

We refer to these two addresses because they certainly put forth in the clearest light the questions of policy on which the decision of the country was invited. The general result of the elections was that Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, taken separately, showed clear and large majorities in favour of the policy of Home Rule. England, however, declared by a majority of 71 in favour of the legislative union. Great Britain taken altogether showed a

majority of 16 on the side of the Union. The complete majority for Irish Home Rule was 57. It was plain, therefore, that Mr. Gladstone, should he come into office, would find himself once again maintained in power by the Irish Nationalist vote, and dependent on its support for the continued existence of his Government. There was some doubt as to whether Lord Salisbury would again meet Parliament as Prime Minister, or would follow the precedents of 1874 and 1880, and allow his successful rival to enter office without the interposition of any formal delay. Under the peculiar conditions and uncertainties of the time, we think that Lord Salisbury was fairly justified in returning to the old-fashioned practice of taking the decision of Parliament as to the general course of his recent policy. There was much confusion and uncertainty as to the influence exercised in carrying the elections by the Home Rule measure, by the Scottish disestablishment proposal, by the local option scheme, and various other political proposals. Parliament met on August 4, and Mr. Peel was again elected Speaker. It was soon announced that a vote of want of confidence in the Tory Government would be moved in the House of Commons by Mr. Asquith, one of the most rising of the newer members in that House, already distinguished as an advocate, and destined to be still more distinguished as a Parliamentary debater and a statesman. The vote of confidence, according to the usual course on such occasions, took the form of an amendment to the

address. Mr. Asquith's amendment declared that 'We feel it, however, to be our duty humbly to submit to your Majesty that it is essential that your Majesty's Government should possess the confidence of this House and of the country, and respectfully to represent to your Majesty that that confidence is not reposed in your present advisers.' Nothing certainly could be more pithy, and at the same time nothing could well be more vague and undefined. Of course Mr. Asquith took care to point in his speech to the precise questions on which the Liberal party were disposed to condemn the Government. All these questions were fully discussed in the debate that followed. But Mr. Asquith's amendment, if it had never been debated at all, was quite enough for its purpose, and the division would have been just the same if it had been taken without any discussion whatever. The clear fact was that the Government had been left by the country in a minority, and nobody on either side of the House supposed for a moment that any speeches delivered by anybody there could convert that minority into a majority. When the division came to be taken Mr. Asquith's motion was supported by 350 members and opposed by 310. There was, therefore, a majority of 40 in its favour. The want of confidence was affirmed by the House of Commons, and there was an end for the time of Lord Salisbury's Administration.

Nothing remained but for Mr. Gladstone to come back to power, and to set himself to form a new

Administration. Mr. Asquith was made Home Secretary, a position so high in the administrative sense that many people professed surprise at the nomination of a man comparatively new to Parliament for such a place. 'Why Asquith?' was the question that went about in political circles. Such a question is often asked in these same circles when a Prime Minister realises the promise of a comparatively young man. The Prime Minister, however, if he is really fit for his leading place, is better qualified than any of his followers to light upon the talents and the character which are needed for high official position. It will be remembered that when Mr. Disraeli made the Earl of Mayo Governor-General of India, the uttermost amazement was freely expressed by Conservatives, as well as by Liberals, in the dining-rooms and the smoking-rooms of the House of Commons. Mr. Disraeli, however, knew his man. He had the instinct of genius to discover capacities which the House of Commons up to that time had not found out; and the fact was that Lord Mayo proved himself to be one of the best Indian Viceroys who had ever served the Empire. In the same sort of way Mr. Gladstone saw in Mr. Asquith a capacity for administration which, despite of Mr. Asquith's great ability as a debater, the House of Commons in general had not at that time discovered.

Mr. Bryce, the historian of 'The Holy Roman Empire,' a book which must hold a standard place in English literature, and the author of a masterly

survey of the working of public institutions in the United States, was made Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Mr. Arthur Acland, son of Mr. Gladstone's old friend, Sir Thomas Acland, became Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education —in other words, what would be called, in countries less given to formality and circumlocution, the Minister of Public Instruction. Mr. Arnold Morley became Postmaster-General. These three men were quite new to official life.

Mr. H. H. Fowler, also comparatively a new man, but who had already shown a remarkable capacity for debate, and especially for clear and convincing statement in debate, was appointed President of the Local Government Board. Lord Herschell was placed on the woolsack as Lord Chancellor; Sir William Harcourt became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord Rosebery was made Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Lord Spencer was First Lord of the Admiralty, and Mr. Campbell-Bannerman was Secretary for War. Mr. Mundella accepted the office of President of the Board of Trade, Lord Kimberley that of Secretary of State for India; and Lord Ripon became Secretary of State for the Colonies. Lord Houghton, son of the poet and patron of poets, was sent to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant. Three familiar names were absent from the list of the new Administration. Mr. Childers had given up Parliamentary life altogether owing to ill-health, the ill-health which soon afterwards hurried him to a premature grave. Sir Lyon Playfair

had come back successful from a struggle in his Leeds constituency, and as it was not easy to find a place for him in the Government, seeing that so many younger men had to be provided for, he was sent up into the House of Lords, and was made Lord Playfair. Mr. Stansfeld had achieved great distinction both as a debater and as an administrator. While he was able to attend to the duty of an office he won the credit of being one of the ablest, most energetic, and most untiring among the heads of administrative departments. Mr. Stansfeld had opened his Parliamentary life with every promise of a really brilliant career. One or two of his early speeches had won the cordial approbation of Mr. Disraeli himself, to whom Mr. Stansfeld was opposed on almost every question of domestic or foreign policy. No man in the House of Commons had a higher character than Mr. Stansfeld. He had that rare courage which enables a member of Parliament to set himself on certain occasions against the whole current of what might perhaps be called genteel or Philistine public opinion. There can be no doubt that he injured his political prospects by identifying himself with a certain movement in domestic legislation which did not find acceptance with most of the newspapers and most of the public. To Mr. Stansfeld that was a matter of no consequence. His conscience showed him his way, and he went his way resolutely; and whether we, for ourselves, think he went right, or whether we think he went wrong, we are all bound to do justice to the courage

with which he maintained his convictions. But there were other reasons that weighed more heavily against Mr. Stansfeld's promotion to office once more. He was one of those whose forward movement is, to adopt the words of a charming writer, 'checked and made slow and patient by ill-health.' In all his administrative work he had to take account of his physical condition, and he was not able to throw himself absolutely into the life of the House of Commons and the work of a department as men of stronger physical frame might have done. So he passed, not unwillingly, out of official life, and before long out of Parliamentary life altogether. It is said that he was offered a peerage as a tribute to his ability and his public service; but Mr. Stansfeld was a man who, although possessed of ample means, was republican in the simplicity of his way of life, and was strongly opposed to the principle of hereditary legislation. If a peerage was really offered to him, one can easily imagine with what an amused and quiet smile he would have declined the proffered honour. The House of Commons became all the poorer for his withdrawal into private life.

Much wonder was expressed at the time because Mr. Labouchere was not taken into the Cabinet, or even into the Government. Mr. Labouchere had long held a distinct and a peculiar place in the Liberal party. He was one of the most radical amongst Radicals, but he had always walked his own independent road, wherever that led him. He was a man of great ability, a man of large fortune; a clever,

rasping, sarcastic debater in the House of Commons; a speaker who always commanded the attention of the House whenever he spoke, and who also commanded a newspaper of great circulation and influence, in which he expressed with the uttermost frankness every opinion that came into his mind. He had again and again done splendid service in that paper by his fearless denunciation of all shams and swindles, all quackeries and humbugs, in the forming of companies or the proclamation of newly devised medical and charitable systems. He accepted actions for damages not only with composure, but with delight, and he generally came off the victor in the courts of law. His cynical style made many people believe that he had no real convictions, and only amused himself by passing off as an extreme Radical and a red-hot reformer of social abuses. Those who knew him well, however, always maintained that his professions of opinion were absolutely sincere, and that the cynicism was put on for his own personal amusement. However that may be, it is certain that he was not invited to join the new Administration; and it may also be taken as certain that Mr. Gladstone never had any intention of making him an offer of such a place. It may be that Mr. Gladstone thought that the proprietor and editor of a popular newspaper would not be the best sort of man to be a member of the Cabinet. It will be remembered that, many years before, Mr. Bright, when he found that the time had come which made it necessary for him to accept a place in a Liberal

Cabinet, at once withdrew from all connection with the Radical newspaper, the *Morning Star*. Perhaps Mr. Gladstone thought that it might be difficult for the proprietor and editor of a paper of great circulation not, some time or other, to be guided in his conduct of the paper by some information that must necessarily come within his reach as a Cabinet Minister. At all events, no tender of office was made to Mr. Labouchere, and he was left to his old function of free and independent criticism.

The new Cabinet, as everyone well knew it would, went to work at once to prepare for a second measure of Home Rule. The second measure was curiously unlike the first. To begin with, it entirely threw over the principle of an absolutely separated Irish Parliament, which had been the central theory of Mr. Gladstone's first Home Rule scheme. The new measure proposed to retain the Irish representation at Westminster. A certain proportion of Irish representatives was still to hold a place in the Imperial House of Commons. We have already mentioned the fact that the banishment—if we may put it so—of Irish members from Westminster was the chief reason why some of Mr. Gladstone's most devoted followers in Great Britain, men who were also thoroughly devoted to the principle of Home Rule, had withdrawn from his side when his first measure was under consideration. Of course we are not speaking of men like Lord Hartington, who had never professed the slightest sympathy with Home Rule, or, on the other hand, men like Mr. Chamber-

lain, who had always up to a certain date been the pronounced and proclaimed champions, if not of any particular scheme of Home Rule, yet certainly of the principle of governing Ireland according to Irish ideas. It has been already set out in these pages that Mr. Chamberlain was in favour of a Home Rule measure only as a last resource—that is, if it were proved to be impossible to satisfy Ireland by any centralised system of government carried on in the Imperial Parliament. Mr. Chamberlain, however, had apparently made up his mind that he would not accept any Home Rule measure from Mr. Gladstone, and although the great difficulty of the scheme of 1886 had been removed by the proposal to retain a certain number of Irish members in Westminster Palace, it was not thought in the least degree likely that the concession would induce Mr. Chamberlain to withdraw from opposition to the bill. Other men, however, like Sir George Trevelyan, for instance, and like many who could be named, came round at once frankly and honourably to Mr. Gladstone's side when the difficulty which was too much for them in 1886 had been removed, and Ireland was still to be connected by direct representation with the Imperial Parliament. Therefore the second Home Rule Bill appeared to be introduced under happier auspices than the first. Indeed, it was easy enough to count the votes beforehand, and there could be little doubt that the measure would pass through the House of Commons. Still, at the same time, there was a certain lack of animation, and even of interest, about the

whole debate in Parliament. Mr. Gladstone introduced the measure on February 13, 1893. Superstitious persons said that the day was unlucky, and asked what the late Mr. Parnell—he then was the late Mr. Parnell—would have thought of a measure introduced on such a day. For it was well known that Mr. Parnell, like many other strong men, had an unconquerable belief in luck or ill-luck on certain days and under certain conditions. Mr. Gladstone's new bill was called, 'A measure to amend the provision for the government of Ireland.' Its essential proposition was, as we have said, for the establishment of a National Parliament in Dublin, while retaining the services of eighty Irish members at Westminster under the same conditions as those existing at the time. There were to be two chambers in the new Irish Parliament: a Legislative Council, to be elected by voters who had a rating qualification of twenty pounds, and a Legislative Assembly, to be elected on the ordinary franchise which qualified for the choice of a member of Parliament. There was a good deal of objection felt to the property qualification, but it was not considered, even by the Irish members, worth while taking much trouble in opposition to such a proposal. The one great desire of the Irish Nationalist members was to obtain a Home Rule Bill of any kind, and leave any necessary emendation of its provisions to some later and more auspicious time. Ireland's single desire just then was to have the principle of Home Rule affirmed by the Imperial Parliament, and so to get some practical return for the long agitation which

had begun with O'Connell, passed into the hands of Isaac Butt, and was so nearly borne to success by Charles Stewart Parnell. Thoughtful Irishmen knew but too well, that if the second effort of a Liberal Government for the passing of Home Rule should fail, it was only too probable that the Irish National movement would fall again into the guidance of the extreme men—'the party of action,' as the phrase used to go in the old Italian days; the men from whose hands Mr. Parnell had made it his business to remove the control of the Irish cause.

For between the first and the second Home Rule Bill a great change had taken place in the conditions of the Irish Parliamentary struggle. On October 6, 1891, Mr. Parnell died at Brighton. The close of that 'really great career' deserves to be dealt with gently. Mr. Parnell became the occasion for a public scandal and for a trial in the Divorce Court. He made no defence to the charge against him, and Captain O'Shea, who claimed the right to divorce, had no difficulty in securing a decision. There is no need for us to go into all that purely private question. The claim for divorce was allowed, as we have said, to pass undisputed, and Mr. Parnell afterwards married the woman who had been Mrs. O'Shea. But the case, as was natural, created an immense sensation in these islands, and, indeed, all over the world; and there was a general election coming on, and everybody knew that it must be affected to a great extent by the result of the proceedings in the Divorce Court. We have already described the

zenith of Mr. Parnell's Parliamentary career, when the whole Liberal Opposition rose up in the House of Commons to welcome him on his acquittal, as it may fairly be called, by the judges in the Special Commission Court. Too soon after that triumphant scene came the decision of the Divorce Court and the public scandal. Mr. Parnell's followers were at first determined to stand by him. They considered that the man's one private lapse from morality had little or nothing to do with his public career. They could review in their minds case after case in which English statesmen had been charged with the same offence, and yet had not been banished from public life because of the private scandal.

The judgment in the Divorce Court was given shortly before the opening of Parliament, and it was the custom of the Irish Nationalist party to re-elect their leader on the first day of the session. When this particular first day came round Mr. Parnell was re-elected without a division, although not without a remonstrance on the part of one or two men. It soon appeared, however, that it would be very difficult indeed to carry the country at the general election in favour of Home Rule if Mr. Parnell were to remain leader of the party. It will be remembered that at the time of the murders in the Phœnix Park Mr. Parnell wrote to Mr. Gladstone offering to resign his seat in Parliament if Mr. Gladstone thought that his retirement from Parliamentary life would be of any advantage just then to the progress of the Irish cause in English public opinion. When the decision

in the Divorce Court was given Mr. Gladstone fully expected to receive something in the way of a similar message or letter from Mr. Parnell. He wrote to one of Mr. Parnell's party, with whom he was personally acquainted, asking whether such a letter or message was likely to be received by him. The member thus addressed could only reply that he had received no intimation of any such intention on the part of Mr. Parnell. There was a good deal of controversy afterwards as to the intercommunications which took place, the usual uncertainties as to the time when this letter had been sent out and that letter had been received, why some communication had not been earlier made or some other communication earlier acknowledged—in fact, there were all the usual discrepancies and misunderstandings that belong to a sudden crisis in Parliamentary life. Some of Mr. Parnell's followers began to think that for the sake of the Irish National cause it would be better that Mr. Parnell should retire for the present from public life. Indeed, the majority of the party had taken it for granted from the very first that his temporary retirement was a matter of course. It did not occur to them as in the least degree likely that a man in his position would care to take an active part in the work of the House of Commons immediately after the decision of the Divorce Court. The proposal made to him was that he should keep out of Parliament for a few months, and that in the meantime the affairs of the party should be managed by a committee, the members of which should be nominated

by him. Mr. Parnell, however, and a few of his friends took fire at the attacks made on him by some of the leaders and teachers of the Nonconformist party in Great Britain, and thought of nothing else. Mr. Parnell not only refused to withdraw for a time from public work, but he issued a manifesto denouncing Mr. Gladstone, and the Nonconformist party, and the whole English people. That manifesto, it is only fair to say, he showed to one member of his party before its publication. That member of the Irish party remonstrated in the strongest terms against the publication of any such manifesto, and told Mr. Parnell that should it appear a break-up of the party was absolutely inevitable. His uttermost urgency could only obtain a delay of twenty-four hours in the issue of the manifesto, and after its appearance in print all hope of reconciliation was gone.

Then began the celebrated sittings in Committee-room No. 15 in the Westminster Palace buildings. The question to be debated was, whether Mr. Parnell ought or ought not to continue to act in the House of Commons as leader of the Irish party. The proposal was again made to him that he should simply keep away from the House for a few months, and allow the Irish business to be conducted by a committee of which he himself should name the members. There was not a man in the party whose principal desire was not to make matters as easy as possible for Mr. Parnell. Many things were known by some members of the party which, according to

their opinion, brought Mr. Parnell's moral guilt down to a comparatively venial degree of offence. Every one of them remembered with gratitude the splendid work he had done for Ireland, and none of them thought of more than his temporary withdrawal from the action of his political leadership. Mr. Parnell, however, did not see his way even to a temporary retirement from Parliamentary work, and some of his friends urged and inspirited him on to maintain his position at all hazards. The result was that after many days of debate in Committee Room No. 15 the Home Rule party broke up. The great majority elected a new chairman, and a small minority held to Mr. Parnell.

Then set in a wild campaign over Ireland, in which the major and the minor divisions of the party fought each for its own cause. Some electoral vacancies happened about the time, which gave an opportunity for a definite struggle. The first victory scored for the larger party was in the city of Kilkenny, where Sir John Pope Hennessy, an Irish Nationalist, who had had a long and honourable career as a colonial governor, contested the seat as an opponent of Mr. Parnell's candidate, and was returned by a great majority. Mr. Parnell threw his whole soul into the struggle then and after. He was a man of immense physical strength, but not by any means of great constitutional strength—the two conditions do not often go together. He was always remorseless in the way in which he overtaxed himself when he had any work at heart which he was determined to

accomplish. During his Irish campaign after the split in the party he never spared himself. He travelled night and day, addressing great meetings in Ireland here, there, and everywhere. He was like a man 'possessed,' in the mystic sense of the the word, by his cause. Some of his closest friends warned him that he was overworking and overtasking himself, and that worse would come of it. He was buoyant, he was indifferent, he was fearless—as, indeed, was his whole nature and temperament—and he would not listen to any suggestion of rest. 'Rest elsewhere' he, too, had apparently taken for his motto, like the famous Flemish rebel against the Spanish rule. The 'rest elsewhere' suddenly came. He had kept up his personal friendship with some of the men who had withdrawn from his leadership, and one of these in the closing days of the campaign strongly advised Mr. Parnell not to rack himself out with incessant travelling and speech-making. Mr. Parnell smiled blandly, and said that the travelling and speech-making did him, on the whole, a great deal of good. Within a fortnight he was dead—dead at the early age, for a public man, of forty-five. Mr. Gladstone always spoke of him with the utmost respect and regard, and openly deplored the sudden and melancholy close of what had been, as he called it, 'a really great career.'

Mr. Parnell's disappearance from public life, and the conditions under which he disappeared from life altogether, came undoubtedly as a cold blast to wither the prospects of the Home Rule cause. Yet

the Home Rule cause made a distinct step in advance under Mr. Gladstone's leadership. The Home Rule measure passed through the House of Commons by a majority of 301 against 267, and was rejected only by the House of Lords. Now, in practical politics, a measure which is carried by the House of Commons and rejected by the House of Lords is looked upon as in a fair way to success. Every popular measure is rejected by the House of Lords in the first instance. Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill of 1886 was rejected by the House of Commons. His second measure, of 1893, despite the great disruption in his party, was accepted by the House of Commons, and would have passed into law but for the action of the House of Lords. Therefore the hopes of all those who were in favour of Home Rule might well have been satisfied, and even gratified, by what happened in 1893. But it would be idle to deny that the split in the Irish party, and the bitter quarrel between Mr. Parnell and some of his followers, and the immediate cause of the whole quarrel, had done a good deal to discourage the English and Scotch and Welsh supporters of Home Rule. These men for the most part stood by the cause, and supported it by voice and by vote. It is surprising, indeed, that so many friends of Home Rule in Great Britain remained wholly undismayed by the conditions under which the struggle had to be carried on, and were faithful to the principle which, under Mr. Gladstone's inspiration, they had voluntarily undertaken to maintain. But there was confusion for the time in the condi-

tions of the Irish question. The Irish party, which had fought so well as one unanimous body, had been broken into opposing sections, and although one section represented a large majority, and the other only a small minority, the fact remained that there was no longer a thorough union in the Irish ranks. Then, again, for a long time the English Radicals of Great Britain had come to have a perfect faith in Mr. Parnell's genius for the mastery of the party, and for its guidance, even at the shortest notice, in the right way. Mr. Gladstone has over and over again paid tribute to the unvarying help which Mr. Parnell had given him in the conduct of the common cause. And now Mr. Parnell was dead; and, according to the opinion of many Englishmen, something like chaos had come again.

We have anticipated the fate of the second Home Rule Bill. It was carried, as we have said, through the House of Commons by a substantial majority. There were some powerful and eloquent speeches made on both sides of the debate; perhaps, after Mr. Gladstone's own speech on the second reading, the greatest impression was wrought by the speech of Mr. Asquith. Those who heard it recognised in it a ready and a satisfying answer to the question, Why Asquith? The bill went up to the House of Lords, and was read there a first time on September 2, 1893, and, as everybody expected, when it came on for a second reading it was rejected by a majority of 419 against 41. It had at least advanced one stage, and cheerful persons reassured themselves with the

recollection that a measure which has once fairly passed through the House of Commons is certain in the end to pass through the House of Lords. But that end was put off for the present, and relegated to an indefinite time, and the fate of Ireland was cast into the Medea cauldron once more.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. GLADSTONE RESIGNS—LORD ROSEBERY SUCCEEDS.

MANY of Mr. Gladstone's most devoted followers were strongly of opinion that, after the decision of the House of Lords, he ought to have obtained permission to dissolve Parliament, and appealed to the country at a general election on the clear, direct question of Home Rule or no Home Rule for Ireland. Some members of his own Administration—even, it is said, of his own Cabinet—were believed to have been distinctly of this opinion. On the other hand, there were Radicals of the most advanced order who thought the country ought to be asked for a decision on the general question as to whether the overruling power of the House of Lords should be tolerated any longer in a constitutional State, the government of which was based on the principle of representation. Mr. Gladstone must undoubtedly have had in his own mind good reason for not taking either course. It is too soon yet for the public to get any really clear idea about the reasons which decided Mr. Gladstone's course of action. The world will have to wait for the time when the letters and the memoirs of statesmen now living come to be published in

order to understand the causes of Mr. Gladstone's quiet continuance in office after the Home Rule Bill, on which he had staked so much, and which he had carried through the House of Commons, had been contemptuously rejected by the House of Lords. Mr. Gladstone, as everyone knew, had been for a great many years a decided opponent of the predominance asserted by the House of Lords. So long ago as the far-off days when his own bill for the abolition of the duty on paper was rejected in 1860 by the hereditary chamber, he had denounced the action of the House of Lords as a 'gigantic innovation,' and had, in a subsequent session, literally compelled the House of Lords to pass the measure. Naturally, therefore, the outer public in general expected that Mr. Gladstone would take the opinion of the country, either on the question of Home Rule, or on the action of the House of Lords. The more, however, we recognise this fact, the more will reasonable and impartial observers be inclined to admit that Mr. Gladstone must have had substantial cause for accepting the defeat, and remaining quietly in office as if nothing had happened.

But the effect on the Liberal party for the time was deeply discouraging, and almost even prostrating. The whole heart seemed for the hour to go out of Liberalism, and the Government itself was infected with the common feeling of humiliation and disappointment. The Administration dragged along, and stuck to its work in a dogged, cheerless sort of way, but everyone felt that some serious change was

impending. For a long time nobody of the outer world had any suspicion of what the change was likely to be. Mr. Gladstone was at his post with unselfish and unsparing attendance as long as the House of Commons kept sitting. The House adjourned for a very short recess on September 21, 1893. Parliament met again on November 2, and sat, except for a short holiday at Christmas, up to March 5, 1894. Mr. Gladstone went at Christmas for a brief holiday to Biarritz, a favourite winter resort of his before and since, and he was again in his place on the Treasury bench before the close of February. During his absence in Biarritz a positive statement appeared in a London evening newspaper —the *Pall Mall Gazette*—to the effect that Mr. Gladstone had finally made up his mind to resign his office as Prime Minister, and to withdraw altogether from Parliamentary and public life. This paragraph, it afterwards appeared, had been previously offered to other newspapers, and rejected by them, on the ground that they did not see evidence enough of its authenticity. It is believed to be certain that the statement was offered in the first instance to the *Times*, and was rejected. The *Times*, perhaps, had had enough lately of secret information tendered for sale. When the statement appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, it was at once contradicted by persons who professed to have, and were likely to have, Mr. Gladstone's own authority for the contradiction. It was said, later on, that Mr. Gladstone had not been consulted about the issuing of the contradiction; and

it was said also, that at the time when the contradiction was published—and this seems very probable—Mr. Gladstone had not made up his mind as to any immediate resignation, and was still open to argument on the subject. Those who were a little within the circle of political knowledge had known for some time that Mr. Gladstone's thoughts were turning towards a resignation of the Prime Minister's office and a withdrawal from public life; but none, or at least not many, of those who knew this much were prepared to expect any immediate action. The fact that Mr. Gladstone had remained in office after the rejection by the House of Lords of his Home Rule measure, and that he had continued to work on as if nothing in particular had occurred, seemed to most people a good reason for believing that he would continue to work on still, so long as his physical powers were spared to him. As far as most members of the House of Commons and the strangers in the galleries of the House could judge, his physical powers did not seem to have deteriorated in any serious way. His voice was still clear and strong and resonant, his energy was unabated, his capacity for work seemed unlimited, and the fire in his eyes was not quenched. Few of us knew that his sight and his hearing had been of late years much impaired; and, although we all knew his age, yet we had got into the way of regarding Gladstone as a sort of half-immortal member of Parliament, who would see every other member of Parliament into the grave, and go on just as before. Nearly twenty years had passed since

Mr. Gladstone withdrew from the leadership of the Liberal party on the ground that his advancing years and diminishing energies allowed him no longer to undertake the incessant duties of such a position. There seemed to most of us no real difference between the Gladstone of 1875 and the Gladstone of 1894; and as he had returned to public life in the former case, we did not see why he should not hold on to public life in the latter.

On March 1, 1894, Mr. Gladstone spoke in the House of Commons in his capacity of Prime Minister. The occasion of the speech was the interference of the House of Lords with a measure of scarcely capital importance—the Parish Councils Bill, sent up from the House of Commons. 'In our judgment,' Mr. Gladstone said, speaking with the utmost gravity and solemnity, 'this state of things cannot continue.' The declaration was received with the most enthusiastic cheering from the Liberal benches. 'For me,' Mr. Gladstone added, 'my duty terminates with calling the attention of this House to a fact which it is really impossible to set aside—that we are considering a part, an essential and inseparable part, of a question enormously large, a question which has become profoundly a truth, a question that will demand a settlement, and must at an early date receive that settlement from the highest authority.' Few men who listened to that speech in the House of Commons knew that it was Mr. Gladstone's farewell to official, to Parliamentary, and to public life. Had this been known there would have been such a demonstration in the

House of Commons as the House probably had never known before. But it was not so understood by the majority in the House. On the contrary, the majority on both sides regarded it rather as a new call to battle from the old chief who had led his followers on so many a field of fight. There is a touching and beautiful passage at the close of one of the forgotten novels—forgotten, I am afraid, even in Germany—of Jean Paul Richter, the 'Flegeljahre,' which came into the mind of one listener as he heard the speech, and felt that the House in general did not understand its meaning. In Richter's novel one of the twin-brothers, the musician brother, Vult, feels himself bound to go away for ever, and in parting plays a farewell tune upon his flute. But the other brother, Walt, does not suppose that it is a farewell, and listens with delight to the notes of the flute until they grow less and less in the distance of the streets, 'for he did not know that with them his brother was leaving him for ever.' The House of Commons certainly did not then know that its greatest man was making his farewell speech. The House listened with delight to that eloquence which was made so impressive by the thrilling tones of his still unimpaired voice and utterance, and thought of nothing else, for it did not then know that Mr. Gladstone was leaving it for ever.

Why did not Mr. Gladstone appeal to the country, and demand a settlement of the long and great controversy with the House of Lords? As we have said, he must have had good reasons. But could anyone

tell us what the reasons were? Quite lately, more than two years after the event, one newspaper attempted a public explanation.

The *Pall Mall Gazette*, which, as we have already said, published the first announcement of Mr. Gladstone's impending retirement, came out thus lately with what it called 'a plain story' of the reasons for that resignation, and of the disputes among the Liberal statesmen which followed it. The 'plain story' has undoubtedly a certain historical interest. We shall speak first of its relation to Mr. Gladstone's withdrawal from public life, and shall afterwards have an opportunity of alluding to its comments on the consequent differences of opinion among the leading Liberals in Parliament. 'It may be stated,' says the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 'without fear of contradiction, that almost from the time of his taking office in August 1892, to the date of his resignation in March 1894, Mr. Gladstone was on many occasions, and on several points, not in complete harmony with the members of his Cabinet. He had formed it with the view of carrying a Home Rule Bill at all hazards, and necessarily had to enlist some fresh recruits, owing to the defection of certain of his former colleagues of light and leading, who had declared against such a measure and gone over to the enemy's camp.' 'The Cabinet,' the *Pall Mall Gazette* says, 'continued to be a far from united and happy family, and when, at one of its meetings, a majority of its members determined that Parliament

should be asked to sanction a largely increased expenditure on the navy, Mr. Gladstone did not hesitate to express his indignation in terms both forcible and clear. Towards the end of February 1894 the Parish Councils Bill, it may be remembered'—this is the bill to which we have already referred—'owing to amendments introduced into it by the House of Lords, was the cause of considerable friction between the two Houses, and on March 1, in the Commons, Mr. Gladstone, while, as a sort of Hobson's choice to save the Bill, accepting certain alterations that had been made in the Upper House, emphatically described the action of the Lords in regard to this and other Government bills as raising questions of the gravest character.' All this, of course, we could have assumed to be generally true, but the more important statement is to come. 'There is good reason,' says the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 'for believing that Mr. Gladstone had already urged his colleagues to reject the Lords' amendments, and to go to the country upon the question of their treatment of the Home Rule and Parish Councils Bills. If this view were adopted, he declared himself prepared to continue as Premier; but his proposal did not commend itself, and was overruled.' Now, of course, as we have already said, it is not possible just yet to know the whole truth and the exact truth on this subject. We must wait until correspondence and memoirs are published. But to the writer personally it would seem more than probable that Mr. Gladstone did take up the attitude

which the *Pall Mall Gazette* ascribes to him. Such an attitude would be consistent with the whole tone and tenor of his speech in the House of Commons on March 1, 1894, and that speech could hardly be consistent with any other attitude. Mr. Gladstone no doubt deeply felt the rejection of his Home Rule measure by the House of Lords, although he must have known well that a rejection was certain to come. The House of Lords never gives way in the first instance to a popular demand. The people have to beat at the doors of the peers' chamber again and again before the demand is conceded. But the people have only to beat at those doors again and again in order to make concession a certainty. Mr. Gladstone may well have thought that the mutilation of the Parish Councils Bill, coupled with the rejection of the Home Rule scheme, gave a good opportunity for an appeal to the country as to the general action of the House of Lords, and its position as an important factor in a great constitutional system. 'Can we put up with it any longer?' we can imagine his asking the country. 'Who gave it the power of interfering between the representative chamber and the progress of popular legislation? Has not the time come to make up our minds as to some settlement of this great question, and to say whether the present position and privileges of the hereditary chamber are not becoming an anomaly and an obstruction?' Certainly, until we are convinced to the contrary we shall believe it likely that the *Pall Mall Gazette* was either well-informed or made a happy conjecture, and that Mr. Gladstone's

voice was for instant dissolution, and for an appeal to the country against the action of the House of Lords.

The *Pall Mall Gazette*, however, goes on to say that, 'strangely enough, as far as can be ascertained, Mr. Gladstone does not appear to have been referred to on the subject of his successor, nor, as far as we are aware, was he consulted before Lord Rosebery was sent for by Her Majesty.' We confess that this conjecture seems to us to want seriousness. It is all but incredible that Mr. Gladstone should not have been asked by anyone, and should not have told anyone, the name of the man whom he believed to be best qualified to act as his successor. As regards the one question of Home Rule, it may fairly be assumed that neither Lord Rosebery nor Sir William Harcourt was what Mr. Gladstone would have thought quite up to the mark. The conversion of Sir William Harcourt had been, in one way, almost as remarkable as that of Mr. Chamberlain in the other. Lord Rosebery had never professed to be an enthusiast on the subject of Home Rule. The *Pall Mall Gazette* suggests that if Mr. Gladstone had been consulted with regard to the nomination of his successor, he would not have named either Sir William Harcourt or Lord Rosebery, but a member of the House of Lords who was not Lord Rosebery. It seems to us hard to believe that Mr. Gladstone, with all his strong feelings against the recent action of the House of Lords, and with his thorough knowledge of the fact that Parliament must be governed from the House of Commons, could have

suggested any peer as the future Prime Minister—we mean, could have made such a suggestion if left to himself, and not overborne by the opinions of some of his colleagues. On the other hand, we put aside altogether the suggestion that he was not consulted upon the subject. It is, indeed, quite possible that he may have deliberately declined to give any recommendation of his own. He knew well that there was at the time a serious crisis existing in the Liberal Cabinet and the Liberal Administration. He must have known that there were members of the Liberal Cabinet who were declaring in private that they would not serve under Sir William Harcourt as Prime Minister. We quite agree with the *Pall Mall Gazette*, that 'it is difficult to understand how the mere fact that Sir William Harcourt was not Prime Minister was sufficient to reconcile those of his colleagues who had objected to his holding that position to continue in office.' Still, it is perfectly certain that the fact was so, and that two or three influential members of the Liberal Cabinet had made it known that they would not serve under Sir William Harcourt as Prime Minister, and yet were willing, or at least were not absolutely unwilling, to serve under him as leader of the House of Commons.

So began the question about the arms of Achilles. Mr. Gladstone was gone, and who was to take his place? Of course, in the true sense of the words, there was no one who could take his place, for the four seas that surround Great Britain and Ireland did not enclose any living man who could possibly be

regarded as the equal of Mr. Gladstone. Still, the Liberal party had to choose a leader, and the question put was, who the leader should be. In the House of Lords there were two or three capable men among the Liberal peers—Lord Rosebery, for example, Lord Ripon, and Lord Kimberley. There were younger men, too, eloquent, able, and full of promise, but public opinion set them aside, chiefly because they were considered too young for the leadership of a great party. Gradually the choice narrowed itself down to the appointment of Lord Rosebery or to the selection of a leader from the House of Commons. Of course, it was assumed in all this consideration, and very naturally and properly assumed, that the Queen would act upon the advice of the Liberal Ministry in appointing a successor to Mr. Gladstone. Lord Rosebery was undoubtedly a man of great and varied abilities. He was probably the ablest all-round man, as the Americans say, to be found in the House of Lords. He was what the Germans used to call a many-sided man; and, indeed, it may be that his many-sidedness told against him when he came to fill the office of Prime Minister. He never professed to be a scholar in the pedantic sense, but he was one of the best-read men in the country. He was a good writer, and he was a brilliant and powerful speaker. Some of the addresses he delivered on great public occasions, as on the unveiling of a monument to Burke in one place, or to Burns in another, were models of oratorical and literary achievement. He had a great love of art, and knew as much about

painting and statues as any amateur of his time. At his intervals of leisure he was devoted to the turf—or perhaps it should rather be said that he was devoted to the turf when his intervals of leisure from politics and books and art allowed him a chance of attending to other affairs. Certainly, if the Prime Minister were to be chosen from the House of Lords, there could be no serious doubt about Lord Rosebery's title to the position. But there was naturally a very grave objection to the idea of once again choosing a Prime Minister from the House of Lords. This objection has been dwelt upon more than once in these pages already. The time will undoubtedly come when the country will no longer endure the idea of a Prime Minister kept far aloof from the direction of the political campaign by his position in the distant House of Lords. Lord Rosebery, moreover, had the disadvantage of never having had a seat in the House of Commons. Lord Salisbury fought his way in that House for years and years, and had thoroughly mastered its ways before he went up to the House of Lords. So, too, in former days had Lord Derby, the eloquent Lord Derby, the Rupert of debate, who had his training and won his fame in the House of Commons. But Lord Rosebery had never been in the House of Commons, except as a visitor in one of the galleries, and no one in the representative chamber had any means of knowing whether he was likely, or not likely, to succeed in the position of Prime Minister.

Now, in the House of Commons there were at least three men intellectually qualified to take the

leadership of the representative chamber itself. These men were Sir William Harcourt, Mr. John Morley, and Mr. Asquith. Mr. Asquith, however, was by almost common consent put out of the reckoning, for the reason—suggesting no disparagement to him—that he was too young a member of the House of Commons to be lifted into such a position. Something of the same kind was felt with regard to Mr. John Morley. Mr. Morley had within a very few years risen immensely in the estimation of the House of Commons. He had proved himself to be a great Parliamentary debater and a genuine statesman. We do not mean by this that the whole House of Commons approved of his action as a statesman. Of course, it is needless to say that the Conservatives and Unionists in the House entirely disagreed with his Irish policy, and it was in his Irish policy that he had his chief opportunity of proving himself a statesman. What we do mean is, that even those who most strongly disapproved of his Irish policy recognised in him the capacity which lifts a man above the level of the commonplace, hard-working head of a department, and exalts him into the order of the statesman. The stoutest Liberal would not deny that Mr. Disraeli was a statesman; the most inveterate Tory would not think of suggesting that Mr. Gladstone was only a mere administrator. In this sense, then, the whole House was beginning to recognise Mr. Morley as a rising statesman. But, at the same time, it was thought by many Liberals that Mr. Morley had not been long enough in Parliament

to be put at the head of the Liberal party in the House of Commons. Then, above all other considerations, came the claims of Sir William Harcourt. As we shall point out presently, the consideration of these claims raised a question which could not have come up in the case of Mr. Asquith, or even of Mr. Morley. That question was, whether Sir William Harcourt ought not to be the Prime Minister. He had rendered splendid services to his party. He was, after Mr. Gladstone, the greatest gladiatorial champion on the Liberal benches. He was ever ready for the fight, and his style of eloquence had perhaps the one single advantage over that of Mr. Gladstone, that it never by any chance, or in one single sentence, went above the heads of the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone sometimes bewildered most members of the House by some daring citation from a classic author whose name they could barely remember, and whose language they could not possibly interpret; but Sir William Harcourt, as Disraeli said of Sir Robert Peel, never gave to the House any quotation which had not been commended by frequent repetition. Sir William Harcourt was in every sense of the word a strong man. He stood up a commanding, intrepid, undaunted figure in politics. The darkest days of political disaster never shook his nerves or lowered his spirits. Undoubtedly, in many ways he was the man best qualified to be the successor to Mr. Gladstone. But the fact was that Sir William Harcourt, like most men of that energetic and strenuous tempera-

ment, had made many political enemies, and was not thought likely to be a popular man, under whom a general election could be fought in the Liberal interests. Even in the Liberal Cabinet itself there were men of mark who, it is said, had firmly declared that, although they would consent to serve under Sir William Harcourt as leader of the House of Commons, they would not serve under him as Prime Minister.

Then, again, the House of Commons is free to choose its own leader, but it is hardly free to choose a Prime Minister. We have seen that when Mr. Gladstone resigned his office as leader of the Opposition many years before, the Liberal members of the House of Commons met as a body and elected the then Lord Hartington as successor to Mr. Gladstone. The Liberal members of the House of Commons could, of course, have met together and elected Sir William Harcourt to be leader of that House, but according to all usage it would hardly be within their province to elect a Prime Minister, especially if the proposed Prime Minister happened to be a member, not of the House of Commons, but of the House of Lords. All these difficulties ended, as was but natural, in a compromise. With many of the Liberal party, the main desire was to get a Prime Minister whose name would carry the greatest degree of popularity at a general election, which everyone knew must come before long. Now, Lord Rosebery was undoubtedly one of the most popular men in the country. His manners were charming, his style of

speaking was delightful; his variety of tastes and occupations gave him so much the greater variety of admirers, and his love for the turf and his success in the racing-field would have won the cheers of multitudes all over the country. Some even of those who would personally have preferred the choice of Sir William Harcourt acknowledged that they saw greater help to the Liberal cause by the selection of Lord Rosebery. So the compromise was made, and Lord Rosebery was recommended to the Queen as Prime Minister. The whole arrangement was carried on in private. The Liberal party in general was never taken into any confidence on the subject. A few of the Liberal leaders in the House of Commons talked with a few of the Liberal leaders in the House of Lords, and the question was settled, and the arms of Achilles were handed over to Lord Rosebery. Even those who had supported privately the claims of Sir William Harcourt could not help wishing every God-speed to so brilliant and charming a statesman as the new Prime Minister. Lord Rosebery had friends everywhere and enemies nowhere, and even those who doubted whether he was strong enough for the place were glad that he had the chance of testing his strength.

A compromise, then, was effected. Sir William Harcourt was in a certain sense the fighting Ajax of his party, but, unlike the Ajax of classic story, he was willing to accept terms of arrangement, and he did not think of committing political suicide. Lord Rosebery became Prime Minister, and to Sir William

Harcourt was given the leadership of the Liberal party in the House of Commons. He had in this way an immense advantage over Lord Rosebery. We are not speaking of the two men as rivals, but only endeavouring to describe the quite different positions which they were called upon to occupy. If Lord Rosebery had been Fox, Gladstone, and Bright all in one, he could have done nothing whatever for the Liberal party in the House of Lords. The Liberal peers were in a miserable minority. They counted for absolutely nothing when a party division came to be called; and nobody studied the debates in the House of Lords with any expectation of finding political guidance there. Where party politics were not concerned, the peers could generally discuss a measure with judgment and calmness and practical good sense. But when a political question came before them, then they became simply a chamber with an overwhelming and unalterable Conservative majority. Sometimes, indeed, it must be owned that even under these conditions they adopted a wise and statesmanlike course. But that was only when they were under the guidance of some Conservative statesman who recommended a wise and sound compromise. Lord Beaconsfield had induced the peers more than once to refrain from setting themselves against the public opinion of the country; and so, before his time, had other Conservative statesmen done, with a like effect. But when Lord Rosebery became Prime Minister he had to deal with Conservative statesmen who were not much

inclined for compromise of any kind with Liberal measures. Lord Salisbury was by training and by temperament a fighting statesman; and just at the time the serious losses of the Liberal party held out to him no very tempting invitation to arrangement. Therefore Lord Rosebery found the Conservative peers in a domineering and aggressive mood, and there was practically nothing he could do to soften their temper or to frighten them into quietude.

Then, again, the new Prime Minister undoubtedly disappointed some of his own followers by his way of expressing himself on certain of the great questions which were supposed to be the creed and the charter of the Liberal party. He discussed the Home Rule question in what might be called the amateur philosopher's manner of treatment, and he pointed out that there was not much chance for Home Rule until what he termed 'the predominant partner'—England—had been convinced of the merits of the scheme. Now, no doubt there was, as his friends said at the time, clear common-sense and sweet reasonableness in this declaration. England, if taken alone, had not up to this time been converted in her electorate to the principle of Home Rule for Ireland, and England was undoubtedly the predominant partner. But then, it had to be observed that through nearly all the great reforming struggles of later years the reforms had been carried by the overweight of the Scottish and Irish and Welsh constituencies. England, if taken alone, was in general a Conservative country. The

impulse and inspiration to reform came from the partners who were not predominant. Then, again, it would not be thought a happy inspiration on the part of a general about to enter on a great campaign if he were publicly to assure his army that he did not quite know whether the greater number of his officers and soldiers were not rather indisposed to win a victory for the cause which he represented in the field. Anyhow, Lord Rosebery's words undoubtedly sprinkled a gentle shower of cold water on the eagerness of the Liberal party. Furthermore, Lord Rosebery, although long known to be resolute in his purpose for some sort of reform in the constitution of the House of Lords, did not by any means satisfy the demands of Liberals in the House of Commons and outside it, who thought that the Liberal party ought then and there to make a resolute and concentrated attack on the hereditary chamber as a political institution.

The result of all this was that to the outer public Lord Rosebery did not seem quite up to the mark as a Liberal Prime Minister, and as the successor to Mr. Gladstone. No Radical could forget that Mr. Gladstone's last words in the House of Commons had conveyed to the Liberal party the bequest of a duty to stand up against the privileges of the House of Lords. Liberal feeling, therefore, was damped and chilled at the very outset by the tone and attitude of Lord Rosebery. Very likely the seeming lack of energy and of conviction came from the mere fact, on which we have already dwelt, that Lord Rosebery was

condemned to a station where he could do absolutely nothing for the advancement of the Liberal cause. The position of a Liberal Prime Minister in the House of Lords is that of a man whose official functions compel him, when he speaks at all, to be always calling out, if not exactly to solitude, yet to listeners the vast majority of whom he cannot possibly hope to convert. Lord Rosebery had obtained a position which was not only absolutely unenviable, but which appealed to the sympathy and even the compassion of all his best friends.

It had been known for a long time in the House of Commons that the state of Mr. Arthur Peel's health made him anxious to be relieved from the hard work of Speaker. Years before Mr. Peel, on returning thanks for his re-election, spoke pleadingly for himself and for any possible defects that there might have been in his conduct of the House, by referring with emphasis, well appreciated by all who heard him, to the 'almost intolerable tedium' of some of the long nights spent in debate. Even in more recent years, when the work of the Speaker is lessened, and when all-night sittings are made practically impossible, the Speaker of the House of Commons has a terribly hard time of it. He takes the chair at three o'clock every day, except Wednesday, when he assumes his official position at twelve noon, and, unless when the House is in committee, he has to remain in the chair during the whole of each sitting. When the House goes into committee he has some relief, because then the chair, or rather

the deputy chair, is taken by the Chairman of Committees. But even then a Speaker gets only an uncertain respite. He lives, if we may put it so, on the premises, and he cannot leave his own home while the House of Commons is sitting. No one can tell at what moment he might not have to be sent for to decide some question of order. Therefore he cannot, like most of us when our active work is done, go to bed and sleep, and forget his cares. There are even still many questions, financial and other, which are exempted from the early closing rule—the rule which declares that no contentious business can be taken in the House of Commons after midnight. Therefore the Speaker, even in these days, when obstruction may be met by the closure, has to remain ready for action in his house on certain occasions, hour after hour past midnight, until the whole of the long day's work is done. On an ordinary day, when the House is not in committee, the Speaker occupies the chair from three o'clock until half-past twelve, midnight, or thereabouts, with one single interval of about twenty minutes for food of some kind; dinner it could hardly be called, since no man not a born Texan could gulp down a genuine dinner in twenty minutes.

This kind of life had been telling severely on Mr. Arthur Peel. He had in his earlier Parliamentary days suffered a great deal from his occupation as Parliamentary Whip to one of the great parties, and the office of Parliamentary Whip keeps a man almost incessantly on his feet. It had been

his evil fortune to go through a long period of the obstruction struggles in the House of Commons, when six o'clock in the morning was no unusual time for the House to conclude its sitting. All this told upon him—for his constitution, like that of his illustrious father, was not naturally very robust—and no one was surprised to hear that he had determined in the early part of 1895 to seek retirement and rest. The leaders of the Liberal Government were anxious to elect Mr. Leonard Courtney to the position of Speaker. Mr. Courtney was one of the ablest men in the House of Commons in many ways. As Chairman of Committees he had proved himself most efficient and absolutely impartial. He had his own strong views on most subjects—he had even his own strong prejudices—but he never allowed these to overmaster him when, as Chairman of Committees, he was guiding a debate in the House of Commons. His manners in public life were not genial, and his action as Chairman was sometimes very peremptory. But he won the respect of everybody, and it was thought quite likely in the House of Commons that he would be accepted as Speaker. The result, however, proved otherwise. The Liberal Government endeavoured to make friendly arrangements with the Conservative Opposition for the unanimous election of Mr. Courtney, but the Opposition proved to be implacable. Mr. Courtney had been an absolutely independent member of the Liberal party. He had again and again on this or that question supported the Tories against the Liberals. He had

to pay the penalty of his independence, for the Tories had lately become displeased with him because, when upon certain occasions they counted upon his support, he had given it to the other side. Therefore it soon became clear to the Government that there was no chance of carrying Mr. Courtney without a struggle and a division, which are always held to be unsatisfactory and to be deprecated where the election of a Speaker is concerned. Of course there have been, even in our own more recent times, disputes and divisions over the choice of a Speaker; but it is always felt that there is something unseemly in the dispute—that it may lead to a doubt as to the impartiality of the Speaker, and that therefore, if possible, a controversy ought to be avoided. The Liberal Government, very sensibly it would seem, forbore to put forward Mr. Courtney as its candidate for the Speaker's chair.

The Liberal leaders looked round the House for the next best man possible, and their choice fell on Mr. William Court Gully, a distinguished lawyer and Queen's Counsel, and member of the House of Commons; for, of course, it need hardly be said that the Speaker must always be a member of the House. Now it is not too much to say that to the great majority of the English people the career of Mr. Gully was absolutely unknown. More than that, there were many members of the House of Commons, not concerned with the legal profession, who knew nothing whatever about him. But the leaders of the Liberal Government proved to be amply justified

in the choice they made. It was precisely one of those cases where individual judgment has to be trusted if anything is to be done at all. Over and over again in these volumes we have pointed to instances in which a minister, on either side of the House, has designated for high office somebody of whom the public knew next to nothing, and has been justified and warranted by the result. This was the case with Mr. Gully. He succeeded one of the most distinguished Speakers the House of Commons has ever had.

On April 8, 1895, Mr. Arthur Peel delivered his farewell address to the House when resigning the Speaker's chair. He spoke with infinite grace, dignity, and pathetic effect. There was only one opinion in the House as to the manner in which he had maintained the honourable traditions of the Speakership. During his earlier period of office he had to come into collision with some of the Irish Nationalist members almost every day. Yet the Irish Nationalist members had no ill-feeling towards him. They thoroughly understood that he had duties to perform, and that he must perform them, and it is satisfactory to recollect that on this parting occasion a high tribute was paid to Mr. Peel by an Irish Nationalist member, speaking on behalf of his party. On the 10th of the same month Mr. Gully was elected Speaker, and, as has been already said, his career amply justified his election. Later on, when the Conservatives came back to office and to power, we shall see that they had the good taste to

support his re-election. It is felt to be quite a reasonable thing in the House of Commons, although not a very common course of action, to oppose the election of the Speaker who is put up for the first time; but if a Speaker be once chosen by the House, it is thought not gracious or wise to oppose his re-election.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CORDITE EXPLOSION.

PARLIAMENT was prorogued on March 5, 1894, and had only a week's interval of rest. The Houses came together on March 12, with Lord Rosebery as Prime Minister, and Sir William Harcourt as Chancellor of the Exchequer and, of course, leader of the House of Commons. To return again to the statements of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, we find amongst the 'charges and allegations' one to the effect that Lord Rosebery objected strongly to the death duties scheme which was proposed by Sir William Harcourt, and which made the great feature of Sir William Harcourt's budget. Now, the manner of dealing with the death duties was the capital point in Sir William Harcourt's budget, and, whether one approves of it or does not approve of it, will undoubtedly be considered, one way or the other, the zenith of Sir William Harcourt's official career. To us it seems hardly credible that on so important a question there could have been a great difference of opinion in the Cabinet, or that, if there had been, Sir William Harcourt could have been allowed to go his own way without check or protest. There has

not been in our times a more important principle set up in public affairs than that which Sir William Harcourt put into action when he adopted the principle of the new scale and arrangement of death duties. The idea was very simple. It was, that if a man comes in for a vast property, he must pay duties on a different scale of arrangement from that which applies to a man who comes in for a small inheritance. Sir William Harcourt's scheme struck altogether against the theory that a man ought to be taxed according to his relative liability—in other words, that a man who has only 500*l.* a year should be taxed according to the same proportion as a man who possesses an income of 5,000*l.* a year, or even that a man with 500*l.* a year of uncertain earnings should be taxed at the same rate as a man with 500*l.* a year of secure and settled income.

All this question had been a long-standing controversy among official statesmen, and among amateur statesmen as well. Of course, the question of income-tax was not exactly the same as the question of the death duties; but the principle which Sir William Harcourt embodied in his budget with regard to the death duties was in its general bearings the same as that which had already been contended for, and within certain limits carried out, with regard to the application of the income-tax. It was the old, familiar question, Shall the rich man pay more in proportion to the maintenance of the State than the poor man? Everybody pays something; everybody has to pay something. Shall the man of wealth pay more in

proportion than the poor or the comparatively poor man? Shall the man with 50,000*l.* a year, or the man who succeeds to a property of 50,000*l.* a year, pay more in proportion than the man who owns or succeeds to a property of 200*l.* or 500*l.* a year? This was really the purpose and the spirit of Sir William Harcourt's budget, so far as the death duties were concerned. We can hardly think it probable that, as the *Pall Mall Gazette* says, Lord Rosebery objected strongly to the death duties, and was overruled by his Cabinet on that point.

The question was really one of vital importance to the Liberal party. Its application raised Sir William Harcourt for the first time to a place amongst the foremost financial statesmen of the reign. It seems hardly credible that such a principle could have been applied in contradiction to, and in defiance of, the firmly expressed opinion of the Prime Minister. Certainly, one does not think of Lord Rosebery as the kind of man who would be likely to remain at the head of a Government the majority of whose members had decided to go against him on a question of the highest national importance. Lord Rosebery does not seem to have been particularly anxious to become Prime Minister. He had occupations enough already without that particular occupation. The place was obviously open to him, if he cared to seek for it, as soon as Mr. Gladstone had ceased to hold its commanding position. We cannot, therefore, understand why Lord Rosebery should have consented to commit himself to the death duties

principle of Sir William Harcourt's budget, if he had not approved of the principle, merely in order to maintain himself in a position which he had not particularly desired to hold, and which in the natural course of things must have been brought some time or other within his reach. It seems to us, therefore, likely that the *Pall Mall Gazette* was not thoroughly informed as to the reconstruction of the Cabinet after the resignation of Mr. Gladstone. The new Cabinet, one might be allowed to think, must have started with a common accord into its new business. The Liberal party had undergone a loss which never could be made good. Lord Rosebery must have felt, just as well as Sir William Harcourt did, how tremendous were the difficulties which stood in the way of the Liberal party's advance when Mr. Gladstone had ceased to be its guide. The most ordinary common-sense would suggest that at such a time there must be something like a general agreement among the Cabinet ministers as to the principles which they intended to maintain and the measures which they proposed to bring forward, and that under such conditions a radical difference of opinion between Lord Rosebery and Sir William Harcourt would have been impossible.

The Liberal Government drifted on. Drifted really is the only fitting word to describe its movement; for there was no captain, and there was no pilot—at least, there was no one whom the crew in general regarded as either captain or pilot. The session, except for the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was, up to a certain time, so

uneventful that the discussion on a proposal to set up a statue of Oliver Cromwell within the precincts of Parliament became quite a subject of importance, and even of excitement. It was certainly not a very new proposal. At various successive intervals since Oliver Cromwell's death motions have been made to set up a statue to the great Protector within the limits of Westminster Palace. To adopt a familiar form of expression, there is a good deal to be said on either side of the question. That Oliver Cromwell was a great Englishman no sane person can deny. That Oliver Cromwell did for a time reign over England is a fact that hardly even insanity itself could dispute. Cromwell reigned over England much more distinctively and more really than many an English king who came in the unquestioned order of succession. But then, it has to be remembered that a statue to Oliver Cromwell within the precincts of Parliament would mean the common Parliamentary approval of what Oliver Cromwell's life and work had been. Now it would, of course, be obviously impossible to get the Irish people to join in any tribute of admiration to the life and the work of Oliver Cromwell. Every historian recognises the fact that the work of Oliver Cromwell in Ireland was a work of reckless and wholesale repression of all Ireland's national sympathies and efforts. To Englishmen of the Puritan and the democratic strain Oliver Cromwell seemed a patriot, a hero, and a wise and saving law-maker. To many other Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Welshmen he appeared as a rebel and a regicide. Then, to Nationalist Irish-

men he showed himself simply as a merciless oppressor. Perhaps a time may yet come when a man can be a patriot in his own country, and, even though he belong to a conquering race, be not regarded as an oppressor in any other country; but that time certainly had not come when Oliver Cromwell was the foremost figure in English history. There were two different and distinct objections to the many successive proposals for the erection of a statue to Oliver Cromwell in the Parliamentary precincts. One was the objection that Oliver Cromwell was not a king, and that, therefore, his statue ought not to stand with those of the kings of England.

This seems to us a wholly futile and even absurd objection. Cromwell was, as we have said, much more distinctly a ruler of the English people than half the kings whose names go down in historical succession. Nor are the statues in Westminster Palace the statues only of sovereign kings. There are statues of statesmen, and soldiers, and judges, and orators, representing all the intellect and all the political parties of the country. But the other objection—that which came from the Irish people—was much more serious. To Ireland Cromwell was known only as a scourge and a curse. During the discussion in the House of Commons to which we are drawing attention an Irish Nationalist member put it that one might as well propose to erect a statue to the Duke of Alva in Brussels or Antwerp, as to expect the consent of the Irish people, still represented at Westminster, to a statue of Oliver

Cromwell within the precincts of the Imperial Parliament. Nothing came of the proposal. Mr. John Morley, who was then Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, explained that he had not quite understood that there was so deep a feeling in Ireland against the memorial of Cromwell. There is some good reason to believe that Mr. Gladstone thoroughly appreciated the meaning and the reasonableness of the Irish protest, and that he was well content that it should have been made, and pleased that it should have been successful.

Then the Parliament went its way until the unforeseen occurred. Mr. Disraeli is generally credited with having originated the saying that the unforeseen always comes to pass. He may have invented it so far as his own reading was concerned, but it is certain that Euripides had made the remark a good many years before Mr. Disraeli's time, and it is quite possible that even Euripides may have caught the idea from somebody else. However that may be, it is quite certain that the absolutely unforeseen did come to pass with the Liberal Administration. On June 21, 1895, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman (now Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman), who was War Minister, brought forward an important scheme of army reform, which involved amongst other matters the resignation of the Duke of Cambridge as Commander-in-Chief. The House of Commons and the country in general were inclined to put up good-naturedly with the resignation of the Duke of Cambridge. The Duke had proved himself on the whole a very good

managing official of the army—if we may use such a phrase—and had looked after the discipline, the well-being, and the comfort of the men with watchful attention and with administrative success. But the Duke of Cambridge had never been regarded as a great soldier, and in any case he was growing old, and had long outlived the years of such men as Alexander the Great, and Hannibal, and Julius Cæsar, and the First Napoleon. Therefore there was no general objection to the scheme of Mr. Campbell-Bannerman's reform, and everything seemed likely to be carried through in the most satisfactory way for the Government. All of a sudden, however, Mr. St. John Brodrick brought forward a motion finding fault with the Government on some very small question about the supply of the material of cordite to the army. The question did not really arouse the faintest general interest in the House of Commons. Members who did not belong to the army or navy knew nothing and cared nothing about it. Even the military men in the House of Commons regarded the motion merely as a sort of attempt which it was quite right for a leading member in Opposition to make against the people in administration, but never supposed that anything serious was likely to come of it. So little was thought about the whole matter that a distinguished member of the Tory Opposition, bearing an honoured name, when agreeing to pair for the night with a member on the Liberal side, observed that 'We may as well pair for the form of it, but it really doesn't matter much whether we do or not, as it is certain

that nothing will happen here to-night.' Something, however, did happen. The Government was defeated by a majority of seven. Even then nobody supposed—at least, nobody outside ministerial circles supposed—for a moment that anything serious was likely to come of the Government defeat. It was a defeat, be it understood, in a committee of supply, a defeat on a single item of military expenditure; and, of course, if a Government were to go out of office on every such mishap, it would be impossible to have any stable administration in the country. Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, however, seems to have regarded the motion as a direct vote of censure on himself and on his personal administration of his department, and he declared that he could not continue in office any longer under such conditions. Then the members of the Cabinet generally made up their minds that the time had come for them all to throw up the sponge.

In truth there were too many difficulties in the Cabinet itself to allow of the administration being carried on much longer to any satisfactory purpose. It was not the vote on the cordite question which killed the Government. The majority of seven against the Liberal statesmen gave the decent and plausible excuse for their withdrawal from a position which was becoming every day less and less desirable and convenient.

To the country at large the sudden collapse was a matter of absolute wonderment. Even the knowledge that there had been a defeat of the Government in committee of supply on the army estimates

did not of itself suggest the slightest reason for the resignation of the ministers. The newspapers of June 22 were read by most Liberals with complacency or with absolute indifference as regarded the cordite vote. Probably the majority of ordinary Liberals did not know what cordite was, and had not the faintest notion why the Liberal Government, which was supposed to be carrying on Mr. Gladstone's task, should feel bound to go out of office because the Tories did not think they had cordite enough in stock. Most certainly, if the Government Whips could have known that a defeat on the vote was possible, they could easily have brought up men enough to render it impossible. The vote was merely what is called in the House of Commons a 'snap vote.' But the members of the Government had for internal reasons begun to find the condition of things intolerable, and the cordite vote did as well as anything else could do to furnish an excuse for their resignation. On June 24 the House of Commons and the outer public learned that the Liberal statesmen had resigned office, and that the Conservatives were certain to come back to power. The Welsh Disestablishment Bill, brought in by Mr. Asquith, went with the rest of the wreck. The Conservatives came into office, and an appeal was made to the country by the process of a general election. Even the most enthusiastic Liberals had little hope of success. Many things were strongly against the Liberal Government. The retirement of Mr. Gladstone had, of course, left the party

without the greatest leader it had had for generations. The defeat of the Home Rule measure by the House of Lords, and the absence of any response to Mr. Gladstone's appeal for a campaign against the hereditary chamber, had discouraged a great many of the sincerest Liberals. Sir William Harcourt's financial policy had put rich men against him in almost every constituency. The Local Veto Bill, which Sir William Harcourt had introduced, turned nearly all the publicans over the country into Tories for the time, and a great many strong Liberal politicians thought the proposal untimely and undesirable. The question was one especially open to controversy, and about which it would be impossible to hope for unity of opinion amongst Liberals themselves. A leading Liberal public man was asked whether he did not think the Local Veto Bill might well have been postponed for five years. His answer was, 'Yes, for five-and-twenty years, and by that time we should probably find that we did not need any such measure at all.' Then, again, there were rumours spreading wider and wider in the political world to the effect that the members of the late Liberal Cabinet did not get on very well amongst themselves; that there was a Rosebery party and a Harcourt party, and that unity of policy, or at all events of action, was hardly to be expected under such conditions. The Liberals all over the country were therefore depressed and disheartened, and the battle was fought by them under the most unfavourable auspices. The result was what everybody

might have expected. The Liberals were thoroughly defeated in England, and not very successful even in Scotland or Wales. In Ireland, the Home Rule party came back in much the same numbers as before; but then, the Home Rule party had been broken into two camps, one holding a large majority, and the other a small minority. The minority was composed of men who would not unite with any Irishmen who had taken part in the deposition of Mr. Parnell. Furthermore, there was dissension even in the ranks of the majority of Irish members, and the dissensions proclaimed themselves most emphatically during the course of the general election. These quarrels in the Irish party tended still further to discourage and depress the Liberal voters in Great Britain. No Liberal, it will be easily understood, deliberately voted against his principles and against his party under any conditions, however unsatisfactory. But the natural effect of such discouragement is that men do not think it worth their while to take the trouble of going to the poll, and that judgment is often thus allowed to go by default. Lord Salisbury came back to power as Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, with Mr. Arthur Balfour as First Lord of the Treasury and leader of the House of Commons; Sir Michael Hicks-Beach as Chancellor of the Exchequer; Sir John Gorst, Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education; and Mr. Gerald Balfour, Mr. Arthur Balfour's younger brother, Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. Some new men were brought in; among the rest Mr. Hanbury, who had given each

and every Government for some years past some trouble by his unsparing criticism of the manner in which the services were administered. Mr. Hanbury was a man of decided ability, and well qualified to add strength to the work of any Administration; but we can hardly be wrong in assuming that he was taken into the Government with the view rather of getting rid of a troublesome critic than of finding a capable man for the business of a department. Some men who, like Mr. Hanbury, had distinguished themselves as Conservative legislators by criticising, and indeed worrying, their own official leaders, were not brought into the new Government, and took their stand accordingly as critics of Tory administration more severely than ever.

The Government on the whole was one of undoubted ability, and the majority by which it had been returned gave it an absolute certainty, so far as anything in human affairs can be certain, of a long lease of power. Lord Rosebery remained leader of the Liberal party—at least, he remained for the time in that position—and Sir William Harcourt of course led the Liberals in the House of Commons. Lord Rosebery's task ought to have been easy enough, for, indeed, there was nothing that he or any other Liberal peer could do to help the Liberal cause in the House of Lords. He could make a number of brilliant speeches in each session, and thus, at all events, keep the Liberal standard flying in the hereditary chamber; but he could not, by any human possibility, carry a majority with him, or

even a considerable minority; and, indeed, there was not the remotest chance of his being able to change a single vote. The best fighting-man could do little or nothing under such conditions, except, indeed, show by his eloquence and by the expression of his convictions that he still believed the Liberal cause to be alive. Very different was the position of the Liberal leader in the House of Commons. There, too, the cause for the present was hopeless, but a leader of the defeated party, who was worthy of his position, had to assume a fighting attitude day after day, as if there were still some chance of victory.

The position of Sir William Harcourt in the new House of Commons was very difficult. The leader of the Liberal party in that House found a band of followers depressed indeed, and disappointed, and even discouraged, but still quite willing and eager to be led into fight again, and to encounter a numerical superiority of their opponents. Sir William Harcourt showed himself a fighting political leader of the first class. There was nothing much to be done; positively, all that he could do was to wait until some advance was made by his opponents, and then to resist the advance. He had roused up bitter enemies amongst the Tory magnates and landowners by the financial policy of his budget in the year before, the main principle of which was that higher duties—that is, duties on a higher scale—should be exacted on the succession of property from those who had vast incomes than from those who had small incomes. Probably the time will come when the

principle put into law by Sir William Harcourt will be regarded as a financial platitude; but it is quite certain that, at the time we speak of now, it was held by the Conservative party to be an audacious innovation, and a part of a great scheme of revolution. Sir William Harcourt therefore found himself confronted by a fighting party whose numbers gave it a superiority in every division; and he knew also that most of its combative bitterness was directed against himself, because of the policy he had initiated when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer. All this only put him the more into a fighting mood; and it must be owned that he showed himself just the man to repair for the moment the fortunes of a fallen party. The Liberals took courage from him and from his fighting spirit, and they rallied again and again to his efforts to damage the measures of the Conservative Government. By the energy and persistency of his opposition he was enabled to render the first session of the new Government absolutely barren of results. The Government introduced a new Education Bill—one other attempt to settle the controversy about public education which had been going on since Mr. Forster's bill was passed twenty-five years before. The great trouble was to find some basis of arrangement between those who contended that public funds, whether raised by State or by rate, ought only to be given for the purpose of secular education, and those whose conscience would not allow them to accept a merely secular education for the children of

the people, and who therefore insisted that they ought to have equal help towards the maintenance of their schools. It was not a question between the Church of England and the Church of Rome, because many of the leading authorities of the Church of England were just as much opposed to a merely secular education as all the authorities of the Church of Rome. The question actually at issue was, whether the private and denominational schools ought or ought not to have an equal amount of public help towards the support of the schools to that received by the board schools, seeing that education was made compulsory, and that every ratepayer, whether he liked it or not, had to contribute towards the maintenance of the board schools. One might have thought that in a civilised community, where conscientious differences of opinion as to methods of education were recognised, some means might have been found of obtaining a settlement satisfactory to all alike. But if such means are to be found, as no doubt they are, they certainly were not found in the measure brought in by Lord Salisbury's Government. On the contrary, the bill seemed as if it were planned with the object of dissatisfying everybody. Its contents positively bristled with invitations to controversy. There was hardly a clause or a line which did not suggest some objection calling for exposition and debate. To add to the difficulties of the situation, Sir John Gorst, who had official charge of the bill in the House of Commons, did not appear to have his heart in the measure. People got it into

their minds, whether rightly or wrongly, that Sir John Gorst was managing the bill with the main object of proving to his colleagues that he had not been properly consulted as to its details, or even as to its principles. To quote a phrase familiar at the time, and still, in the House of Commons, Sir John Gorst was said to be 'Manipuring' the measure. The allusion was, of course, to Sir John Gorst's famous speech in the House some few years before when, as Under-Secretary for India, he poured out a stream of vitriolic sarcasm on the policy of his own and every other English Government with regard to the native princes and the Indian populations. 'Manipuring it again' was a common saying in the House while Sir John was professing to defend the Education Bill which was put in his charge. Sir John Gorst was undoubtedly a very able man; probably there was no abler man in the Conservative Government. Yet he had not got as far as some men, intellectually his inferiors, had gone. He was, for instance, not a member of the Cabinet. Those who vindicated the policy of Lord Salisbury asked, How can you have a Manipuring statesman in the Cabinet? But there were others who asked, How are you to get on with a man at once so clever and so reckless unless you put him in the Cabinet, and so fix on him his full share of responsibility for the policy which he has to explain and to defend? Before long it became obvious to everyone that the Education Bill could not be carried through in that session.

Strange to say, there are a great many troubles which come upon a Government from the possession of too large a majority. The bonds of discipline become relaxed. Everybody says to himself, 'It does not matter whether I attend or not; it does not matter how I vote; I may allow myself when I like an occasional freedom of action; my leaders in the Government are sure of a great majority all the same.' So long as the majority is narrow men will hold to the discipline of their party, and will be certain to vote in what they or their chiefs consider the right division lobby, and will devote themselves day by day to their own political cause. But once you get an overwhelming majority on either side, the bonds of discipline are naturally disarranged. A man says to himself: 'Now, I have my own notions on this subject. It would be no part of my business to express them in voice or in vote if my opinions concerned the existence of the Government. But then we have a majority of 150 or 160, and I am perfectly safe to express my individual opinions without in the least endangering the existence of the Government to which I profess my allegiance.' Now that condition of things was one of the troubles of the Conservative Government in 1895, as it had been the trouble of many a Government, Liberal and Tory, before that time. It is seldom a good thing for a Prime Minister to have too large a majority. It tends too much towards reckless individual action. If a man, say a Conservative, knows that a great deal depends on his individual vote, he is not likely

to let himself loose, and to set up what some Americans call 'a side-show on his own account.' But if he feels quite certain that the Government has a safe and settled majority of its own, he regards himself, of course, as quite free to adopt any fantasies of his own upbringing, and to let the Government do the best it can without him. No Government that ever was formed in England can count upon absolutely servile adherence. Some men, at all events, will always be independent of the mere requisitions of the Government Whips. Therefore in every ministerial arrangement some account must be taken of the men who cannot simply be dragged into the lobby in obedience to the call of the ministerial officials. That is one of the disturbing problems of the working of the Parliamentary machine. Given a Government with a great majority, it can always count on having that majority for any essential political purpose, but it cannot always count on having that majority when a sudden side issue arises, the meaning and the force of which nobody had contemplated before. No crisis has arisen in the history of all the modern Parliaments more striking than something which is created by an altogether unexpected event. Nothing is ever certain in the House of Commons. The most elaborate calculations cannot make it appear that the decision on some unexpected question is to go this way or the other. When the latest Egyptian question came up the House of Commons knew no more about the whole subject than did the

general public. The mind of the public was, so far as information went, a perfect blank. But there was a general floating idea that, as we had got into the Egyptian trouble, we could not help putting up with it until we could fairly get out of it. There was no very clear idea in our minds as to the perpetual occupation of Egypt by England. Few Englishmen, in fact, were particularly anxious for the perpetual occupation of Egypt. But still, the idea was entertained that in face of the French Government, and in face of our Government as well, England could not possibly let go her hold on the occupation of Egypt, whatever responsibility was involved in that policy. We are only referring to the last Egyptian expedition by way of illustrating the difference which a Government with a large majority experiences when some thoroughly Imperial question is not in hand. Not any of the Tories, and not many even of the Liberal Opposition, would have thought of interfering with the policy of the new expedition, directed, no doubt, in the way of Khartoum, although its purpose was kept as absolute a secret from the outer public as some stroke of Chinese Imperial policy would be kept from the vast majority of the Chinese population. But the Education Bill was quite a different matter. Almost every member of the House of Commons was interested in the question, knew all about it, and had long formed his opinions about it. It was, in brief, the old question between schools where religious or denominational education was given and schools

where such education was purely secular. During the course of this measure through the House of Commons the supporters of the bill, as well as the opponents, helped to its final withdrawal. The supporters of the Bill had their own strong opinions, and they were eager to argue every question and to confute their enemies, and so they helped their enemies to prevent the bill from passing. Even his strongest opponents cordially admitted that Sir William Harcourt had done his own work well in obstructing the bill, and in provoking its own supporters to obstruct it.

The bill had to be withdrawn in the end, because the new Government had something else to do besides simply dealing with the question of education; but there were some of the principles of the bill which deserved more tolerant treatment than they got. Anyhow, the withdrawal of the bill was a great triumph for the Opposition.

The world of science, the world of scientific controversy, and the world of social movement, even the world of what is called society, lost a great figure when Thomas Henry Huxley died on June 29, 1895, at the age of seventy. We have already endeavoured to do justice in this history to the intellectual position and the work of Huxley, and can only now record the expression of the common regret at what may fairly be called, as lives are now reckoned, the premature close of a great life. His name will rank among the highest in the science of his age.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE EASTERN QUESTION ONCE MORE.

In 1895 the Eastern Question broke out, not in a new place or in a new way, but in the terribly old, familiar place and way. It began again with the massacre of Armenian Christians in Constantinople itself, and in many of the provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The Armenians are amongst the best educated and the most intelligent among what we may call the working residents in the Turkish capital and the Turkish Empire. As mere bearers of burdens they are strong and patient and capable, and they have an intelligence and an education that lift them sometimes beyond the mere position of bearers of burdens, but may not often, of course, carry them on to the intellectual level of the Greek residents in Turkey. To the fanatical Moslem the Armenian is a common subject of class and religious hatred. There is a labour question as well as a religious question. The Armenian is always suspected of having in hand some plot to overthrow the rule of the Sultan. Very likely the vast majority of Armenians, concerned chiefly for their bodily work, never trouble their minds about any such enterprise. But if the

Armenian in general did trouble himself about such an enterprise there would be little reason to find fault with him for his purpose. He is suspected and hated by the Moslems in Turkey, and, as we have already seen in the course of this History, there are periodical and sporadic outbreaks of Turkish mobs to get rid of the detested Armenian. Towards the closing days of 1895 there began a perfect outburst directed against the Armenians of the Turkish cities, towns, and country places. It was like a mania, like a passion, of religious hatred and destructiveness. All the horrors, and worse than the horrors which Mr. Gladstone had denounced some twenty years before, were re-enacted in the Turkish capital and in the Turkish provinces. Mr. Gladstone himself came out of his retirement, as he had done before, to raise his protest against those crimes committed against Christians under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. The memories of men went back to the old days of the great meeting in St. James's Hall, where Mr. Gladstone denounced the Bulgarian massacres, and Mr. Freeman supported him with all his strength. The Armenian massacres became such a scandal that the European Powers, apart from Turkey, had to take grave account of them. But then there were serious difficulties in the way. What was to be done? Should the European Powers intervene, and put the Turkish Empire under coercion? Undoubtedly, if the Western Powers had been agreed—and we only use the word Western to signify all the Powers that are not Ottoman—the task

would have been easy enough. If England, France, Russia, Austria, Germany and Italy had agreed to say to the Porte, 'You must stop those massacres, or we shall occupy your capital and your country,' all would have been comparatively easy. But there were differences between the great European Powers. Russia held off for a long time. The memories of the Crimean War were living still—of the war which England chiefly promoted in order to defend the Turkish Empire from the encroachments of Russia. About the policy of that war there is not now, we fancy, a second opinion amongst educated Englishmen. It was not really an English war at all. It was a war got up by Louis Napoleon, the Emperor of the French, for the purpose of making an alliance with England, and with the hope of 'booming'—to use the American phrase—his dynasty. Such a war of course made Russia suspicious of every alliance with England, and led her to see, often quite unjustly, some mysterious anti-Russian purpose in every English enterprise.

Then, again, the English occupation of Egypt made the French rather jealous, suspicious, and uneasy. The occupation of Cyprus made Russia doubly suspicious, although the occupation of Cyprus was undertaken partly in order to obtain some guarantee or security for the right of England to interpose her protection between the Porte and the Christian subjects of the Sultan. Perhaps it was that very reason which made Russia look with disfavour on the action of England with regard to the

Christian subjects of the Porte. Nobody can doubt, nobody has ever expressed any doubt on the subject, that Russia desired to have the protection of the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire left in her own hands. Then, again, Mr. Disraeli had called Cyprus 'a place of arms.' There cannot be any question that the action of English policy in regard to the Treaty of San Stefano had been a profound mistake. It had put Russia against us almost as much as the Crimean War itself had done. But after the jubilations in the music-halls of London and other such places over the break-up of the San Stefano Treaty a very different feeling began to grow up in soberised and reflecting England. The old idea that Russia was our enemy all over the world began to give way, and the belief grew broader and broader that there was room enough on the civilised earth for Russia and for England. Still, the old-time difficulty came up when English statesmen had to take account of the horrible condition of things existing in the Turkish Empire, and to ask themselves what was to be done to put a stop to the massacres. A change of Ministry took place in England during the long prevalence of Ottoman crime, but so far as the present writer can judge there does not seem to have been any serious change of policy. The whole question had nothing to do with partisan politics, and the Conservative Government must have felt very much the same about the Armenian massacres as the Liberal Government had done. Nobody could possibly have supposed that

Lord Salisbury was devoid of the common feelings of humanity, or that the fact of a man's being a Tory Minister made him suddenly indifferent to the sufferings of his fellow-Christians in the Ottoman Empire.

The first question was not what would, but what could, the English Government do? The great European Powers were split up in various ways. The choice of movement lay with Russia. The Russian Prime Minister of that time—the time when the crisis was still new—Prince Lobanoff, was entirely opposed to any intervention of the European Powers for the coercion of the Porte. Probably, if Prince Lobanoff had been invited on the part of the Great Powers to entrust the task of intervention to the hands of Russia alone he might have found a different answer to the suggestions made to him. But as it was he made it known clearly enough that Russia would not consent to any European intervention for the coercion of Turkey. Then came up for Englishmen the question, What can be done in the way of practical intervention? Is England to intervene single-handed, and undertake the coercion of Turkey as her own unaided business, with the chance or the certainty of having to encounter Russia, and to fight over again the old Crimean War on totally different principles? Having fought against Russia to maintain Turkey, is she now to fight against Russia in order to put down Turkey? No one can deny that English statesmen confronted with such a difficulty found it hard to make up their minds. Suppose England did take the matter into her own hands and

make war against Turkey and against Russia, would the unhappy Armenians be any the better for such an intervention? Has any State a right to bring all the horrors of a great war upon its citizens merely with the noble quixotic purpose of saving a foreign race from ill-treatment? There were many generous Englishmen and Englishwomen who answered this question frankly in the affirmative: 'Yes, let us risk everything rather than look on tamely and see this great wrong done to populations of kindred faith whom we have pledged ourselves by treaty to protect.' It is hardly possible not to be fascinated by the nature of so high-spirited a proposition. The Cyprus Treaty gave England the right of protecting the Christian populations of the Turkish Empire, and the whole diplomacy of man can confer no protective right upon a State which does not carry with it the liberty to use compulsion as a last resource. That was the worst about the Cyprus arrangement, and all the other arrangements, so far as England was concerned, which belonged to the Congress of Berlin. In that Congress England was occupied mainly with the idea of keeping back the policy of Russia, and otherwise made little account of the responsibilities she was undertaking. English statesmen, one might well have thought, would even then have had some recognition of the possibility that Christian populations might again be oppressed and massacred in the Ottoman capital and in the provinces of the Ottoman Empire. But the one idea seems to have filled the diplomatic mind of England at the time—the idea that

the encroachments of Russia must be resisted; and thus England undertook responsibilities on behalf of the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire which she apparently imagined that she was never likely to be called upon to fulfil. Now the time had come, and she was called upon to choose between carrying out her obligations to the Christian subjects of the Porte, and the chances of turning Russia against her, and of having to stand the brunt of a great European war.

Therefore, in point of fact, for drear and hopeless months after months nothing whatever was done. The representatives of the Great Powers at Constantinople consulted every day, and, of course, nobody in the outside world knew what they were saying to each other, and the heart and conscience of England were agonised by the ever-recurring accounts, only too well authenticated, of the massacre of Christians. At last the whole subject seemed to become outworn and stale. Our eyes grew accustomed to the daily details of the outrages and the slaughter. We began by degrees to think that a new story of the murder of Armenians was only like an account of a gale in the Channel or a police raid upon a gambling club. The human mind is constituted in that way, and the sensation of horror in matters that do not directly concern ourselves is not of long duration.

To many of us it must have occurred, during all those long and terrible months, that it would have been far better, after all, if England had adopted a policy of non-intervention as regards foreign

countries in the strictest sense of Richard Cobden and John Bright. Bright once said that he was totally opposed to intervention in the affairs of foreign States, on the ground that we were certain to intervene too soon, or too late, or on the wrong side. It cannot be doubted that many of the massacres of the Armenian Christians were due to the Moslem fanatical hatred of England, which had undertaken to protect them. If England had left them alone from the beginning; had said, 'We have nothing to do with you, we cannot protect you, we will not protect you,' the Armenians might have got on better with the Ottoman authorities. But the idea that there was a certain class of the population which was put under the special protection of a Christian, and therefore an infidel, State undoubtedly brought up a rankling sentiment in the Moslem mind. England had fought for Turkey and made a great war for her, had spent vast sums of money and many thousands of gallant lives for her, and had received just the gratitude that, under all the conditions, might have been expected. As the troubles went on English statesmanship, whether Liberal or Conservative, seemed to be well inclined to reconsider its position. At one time there began to be a general feeling that the best course to pursue would be to give Russia the initiative in the policy of coercion. The present generation of Englishmen had almost forgotten the dread and hatred of Russia which prevailed in the days of the Crimean War, and even in the days of the Berlin Congress. Yet it

could not be questioned that Russia had gained immensely in power since the Crimean War, and even since the Congress of Berlin. Her influence in the East had been making progress by leaps and bounds, and it would seem that of late she has been assuming something very like a protectorate over China. But the feeling of alarm has passed away from the English mind, and most Englishmen quietly accept the idea that Russia must go as far as she can, and that it is no business of theirs to throw themselves, at whatever risk, across her path. Any movement on the part of our diplomatists to offer frankly an initiative to Russia in the course of action to be taken for the protection of the Sultan's Christian subjects would have been welcomed by the vast majority of the people of Great Britain. But the months went by, and the massacres went on, and the diplomatists kept consulting, and the outer public kept guessing at the nature of their consultations, until the outer public grew weary of guessing, and put the whole subject away.

The troubles in Turkey were suddenly much complicated and made more bitter, if that could be, by the troubles in Crete. Crete is a small island lying just south-east of Cape Matapan and the mainland of the kingdom of Greece. Crete has been always in a state of chronic insurrection against the Turkish Government. If there is an island in the Levant which is thoroughly Greek in sentiment, in tradition, and in purpose, it is Crete. There shines upon Crete the beauty of the legend which says that

Jupiter was born and bred in her Mount Ida. Crete passed through many hands; almost every event in European politics from the earliest days handed her over from one conqueror to another. She has been compared to Penelope, but the comparison will not hold. Penelope was able to maintain herself and defend her place until at last her Ulysses came back from the war. Crete is more like the hapless lady whose story is told in prose by Boccaccio and in verse by La Fontaine, and who was captured by so many pirates and robber-chiefs before at last she settled down into a happy matrimony with the lover to whom she was engaged when she set out on her travels. Crete was conquered by the Romans, was seized by the Saracens, was sold to the Venetians, was captured by the Turks. Over and over again since Crete was seized by the Ottoman Government Cretan popular assemblies demanded the freedom of the island. When the king of the Greeks was set up, mainly because of the spirited and honourable action of England, the popular assemblies of Crete again and again demanded union with the land through which, to use Byron's words, their life-blood tracked its parent lake. These appeals were always refused, for reasons which the ordinary and undiplomatic mind would find it impossible to understand. It was apparently laid down as an indispensable condition to the peace and comfort of Europe that the Greeks of Crete should be held under the dominion of the Turkish Pasha. So far as England was concerned, the puzzle about this policy was that England,

as has just been said, was the principal influence in setting up the kingdom of Greece and redeeming the most famous country in the world from the ignorant and brutal rule of the Turkish Government. One of the glorious dreams of Englishmen in the earlier part of the century was the rescue of Greece from Ottoman rule. Byron died for Greece, and Byron's name is still cherished and treasured in Athens, and in every part of the country to which he gave up his gallant and generous life. But, for that mysterious diplomatic reason of which we have spoken, a reason which we, like most others, fail to understand, the policy of the European Powers continued to declare that the Turkish rule must be maintained in Crete. When the Crimean War broke out, England made herself the special champion of Turkey, and took a leading part in terrorising poor little Greece out of any attempt to act on behalf of her fellow-countrymen and co-religionists, and of the island to which legend, at all events, ascribed the birth of Jupiter.

Some very 'independent' members of the House of Commons are in the habit of saying that when the two opposing front benches of the House—the Treasury Bench, that is to say, and the Front Opposition Bench; in other words, the men in office and the men just out of it—are agreed in any policy, that policy becomes suspicious to the country in general. It would seem that of late years any policy in which the great European Powers can act in concert must be a policy which the general public

have to view with suspicion. We have already mentioned how for months and months the European Concert, as it was called, looked on impotently, hopelessly, at the crimes committed under the rule of the Sultan in Turkey and in Armenia. Much the same sort of thing was done in Crete. Time after time some new constitution was set up under the pressure of the great European Powers. But in order to know what the value of a constitution is, one must know what is the class of men by whom it is to be worked, and Turkish rule in Crete would have rendered worthless the finest constitution that ever could have been devised by Locke or by the Abbé Sieyès. The extortion, the rapine, the disturbances, the murders, went on all the same. It was not much comfort to an oppressed and impoverished Cretan that he was dying under a brand-new and beautiful constitution.

The result of all this was that Crete was ever in rebellion against Ottoman government. In truth, to anyone who knows anything at all about the conditions and the feelings of Greek populations it might have been evident from the first that the whole of the forces of the great European Powers combined could not compel the Greeks of Crete to submit tamely to the Ottoman Government. All sorts of hard things have been said against the Greek populations, but no intelligent observer has ever said that the Greeks were either fools or cowards. Nothing, even in the deeds of England's own sea-kings, has surpassed the daring, the energy, and the success of Kanaris and

his fire-ships against the Turkish navy in the war of independence. When, therefore, the troubles broke out in Crete this last time there was naturally an impassioned enthusiasm in Athens, and all over the mainland of Greece, and through the islands as well, in favour of the union of Crete with the Hellenic kingdom. The Greek Government determined that it was necessary to make some forward movement for the rescue of Crete. In point of fact, no Greek Government could have held out for twenty-four hours which looked on at the steps for a re-conquest of Crete and made no movement to prevent it. The conveniences of European diplomacy have, no doubt, sometimes their solid importance, and no great State wants, if it can avoid it, to get into diplomatic trouble with its neighbour. But all such considerations are apt to be forgotten when a thrilling question of kindred and religion arises, and thus it was that little Greece, with her small army and her small fleet, undertook to see that no further landing of Turkish troops should take place in Crete.

Prince George of Greece, the second son of the King of the Hellenes, and the nephew of the Princess of Wales, was put in command of the expedition. His duty, so far as we understand, was to prevent the Turks from landing more troops in the island, and, if necessary, to occupy Crete itself in the name of the Greek Sovereign and of Greece. On the other hand, it appeared to many highly diplomatic minds that the best thing for the European Powers in concert to do would be to occupy Crete themselves,

and put down disorder, while considering what next ought to be done about the island: whether it ought to be left under the control of Turkey, with another fine new constitution specially devised, or whether it should be created into a sort of Bulgarian principality, or whether it should be handed back to Turkey absolutely and unconditionally. The tendency of public opinion in England was, we may say, almost overwhelmingly against any policy which seemed to palter with the question of a surrender of Crete under any imaginable conditions to the rule of the Ottoman Sovereign. There was, indeed, at first a very common desire that Greece should go her way and take her chance: 'And if I perish, I perish,' as Esther says in the Scripture.

The European Concert naturally worked to little purpose so far as Crete and Greece were concerned. It could hardly be otherwise. Two of the Great Powers, at least—Russia and Germany—were totally opposed to the addition of Crete to the Hellenic kingdom. The whole system of the so-called European Concert was utterly unlike the principle of George Canning, out of which came the emancipation of Greece. Canning's policy was to get into an effective combination the Great Powers that were in favour of the emancipation of Greece; and he accomplished this object, and Greece was set free, and became an independent kingdom, although he did not live to see his triumph. The European Concert of to-day is made up of a number of States which had no policy in common, and in which every movement suggested by

one Power was opposed and counteracted by some other. All the Powers professed themselves willing to give self-government to Crete while leaving her still to be under the suzerainty of Turkey. The Cretans had had enough of that sort of thing, and had set their hearts on becoming a part of the Hellenic kingdom.

Fighting was incessantly going on between the Cretan insurgents and the Turks, and the fleets of all the Powers who belonged to the European Concert sent war-vessels to try to maintain peace by the process of war, and also to blockade the Cretan shores. It was formally announced that if Greece should in any active way favour and promote the Cretan movement the coasts of Greece herself would be blockaded. On the other hand, there was great danger that the Greek volunteers, directed by the really powerful National Association, would cross the Macedonian frontier and make war there. The whole condition was full of peril to the maintenance of European peace, and no one could tell from one moment to another when the maintenance of that peace might not be rendered impossible.

Public opinion in England, and indeed through all Great Britain, was much divided on the subject. It is not going too far to say that the vast majority in these islands were in favour of the Greek cause, and were also inclined to resent the idea of England being domineered over in her foreign policy by Russia and by Germany. Meanwhile the fighting was going on in Crete, and on one occasion England was

much startled to hear that an English admiral had joined in the shelling of some of the Cretan insurgents. On the other hand, many Englishmen pointed out that if Greece would only keep quiet she might have her own way in the end—as if it was by keeping quiet that Greece obtained her independence in the days of Canning. It was said that Greece had only to lie low and let the Cretans accept for the time any scheme of local self-government, and then when things had settled down, and Crete had got a local parliament, it would only be necessary for that parliament to declare the island annexed to Greece, and probably no one would intervene. But the difficulty in the way of these suggestions was that the Cretans would not listen to them. They did not believe in the good intentions of Turkey or the earnestness of the Great Powers, and even the King of the Hellenes himself could probably not have restrained them. The King of the Hellenes was not himself in very safe condition. Greece was aflame with a passion for the annexation of Crete. Athens was the scene of tumultuous national meetings every day. It is doubtful whether the king could have made head against the fervour of the movement. Of course, he went thoroughly with it; but personally, he still clung to the bare possibility of maintaining peace while yet keeping a way open for the union of Crete with the Hellenic kingdom. He appears to have played a courageous and a dignified part all through this most trying episode of history, and to have shown himself as every inch a king.

The Greek Government had at a comparatively early period of the controversy defended with skill and dignity the position it had taken up. In one of its despatches issued from Athens on March 8, 1897, the Greek Government said, 'Unless then the new administration with which Crete is to be endowed is such as will definitively restore order, the Hellenic Government is convinced of the impossibility of putting an end to the present state of revolution. Anarchy will continue to ravage the country. With such a prospect in view, our responsibility would be enormous if we did not earnestly implore the Great Powers not to insist upon the system of autonomy decided on, but to give back to Crete what it already possessed at the time of the liberation of the other provinces which form the Hellenic kingdom, and to restore it to Greece, to which it already belonged in the time of the presidency of Capodistria.' Then follows a suggestive passage: 'With these ideas and in the name of humanity, as also in the interest of the pacification of the island, a pacification which is the sole object of the solicitude of the Great Powers, we do not hesitate to appeal to them in regard to the other measure, relative to the withdrawal of our military forces. Even if in view of the presence of the united squadrons of the Great Powers in Cretan waters, and under the conviction that those fleets would not allow the landing of Ottoman troops on the island, the presence there in addition of all the troops of the

Hellenic fleet now in those waters were not considered necessary, the presence in the island of the Greek army is on the other hand demanded by the dictates of humanity, and is necessary in the interest of the definitive restoration of order.'

The appeal was in vain; the Great Powers did nothing, and war broke out between Greece and Turkey. The Greeks were ill-prepared for the struggle, they lacked discipline, arms, and commissariat, and their warlike enterprise was a failure. Then the Great Powers came in again, and then again nothing in particular was done. Turkey proposed to retain Crete—to occupy the island in arms, but to promise it a new constitution. Germany had a plan of her own. England could not see the beauty of that plan, only a German bondholder could properly appreciate it. So the Great Powers went into conference anew, and, to use a phrase familiar to our parliamentary reports, were 'left sitting.'

CHAPTER XIX.

VENEZUELA AND SOUTH AFRICA.

In the midst of various other foreign complications and troubles the Venezuela Question was suddenly started upon Great Britain and the world in general. It was started by no less a person than President Cleveland himself, who, in a message to Congress on December 17, 1895, declared in very peremptory tones that the Venezuela Question must be immediately settled, and that, on the basis of the Monroe doctrine, he intended to appoint a commission which was to ascertain the true line of division between British Guiana and Venezuela, and to announce what course the disputants on both sides would be expected to adopt. The Venezuela Question is a very old outstanding dispute between the English Government, as the occupant of British Guiana, and the Republic of Venezuela. The dispute had been dragging on for years after years, and during the greater part of that time not one Englishman or one American in ten thousand felt the slightest interest in its principles or in its progress. Indeed, until quite lately the territory upon either side of the contested boundary-line was generally regarded as

of no value even to its owner. The dispute began when Great Britain took Guiana from the Dutch in 1795. The boundaries between British Guiana and Venezuela were not settled as they ought to have been at that time, and had never been settled up to the date of President Cleveland's message. In 1840 the Imperial Government sent Sir R. Schomburgk to report as to a convenient and satisfactory boundary-line. Sir R. Schomburgk made a report, the principles of which, however, were not accepted by Venezuela. It is not necessary now to go into the whole history of the dispute, and we have said this much only in explanation of the part which the Schomburgk line takes in the whole of the subsequent controversy. Meanwhile, however, an event took place the like of which has had a good deal to do with many of our disputes in various parts of the world. Gold was discovered in the regions lying on both sides of the disputed boundary-line, and a rush was made by Englishmen and men of various other nationalities for the scene of 'the potentiality of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice'—a phrase which, it may be remarked in passing, Doctor Johnson really never did use. The English Government was not so much concerned about the precision of the boundary-line as about the fact that under certain conditions a number of English settlers might possibly be handed over to the dominion and control of the Venezuelan Republic. The United States offered early in 1895 to use their friendly offices in order to bring about a peaceful and satisfactory settlement of the whole dispute.

Meantime, however, the Venezuelan Government, or at least some of its officials, had been very peremptory and high-handed in their dealings with Americans, as well as with Englishmen, just across the English side of the proposed boundary-line. All this tended to exasperate feeling in England and to swell the mole-hill controversy to the dimensions of a mountain.

Still, it must be owned that very few English people at home troubled their heads in the least about the dispute. There were numbers of more serious questions agitating and distracting public opinion. The Eastern Question, as we have shown, had again broken out with a flame and a fury which threatened to involve the peace of all Europe. England had her troubles in Egypt, and was engaged in an expedition which, as many people thought, might lead to a misunderstanding with France. There were the troubles in South Africa, which many men at one time believed might lead to a serious misunderstanding with Germany. Then suddenly came President Cleveland's message, with its seemingly dictatorial and almost arrogant intimation that America had the right to settle the whole question between England and Venezuela. The message was the more surprising because President Cleveland had always had the reputation among those who knew him, and among those who had read about him, of being what his countrymen would call a 'level-headed' person. He seemed about the last man in the United States who was likely to make any appeal to the Jingoism of the population; for, of course, it

is needless to say that there are Jingoes in the United States just as there are Jingoes in England. We cannot yet know what was the real occasion, or inspiration, or purpose of President Cleveland's sudden burst of aggressive eloquence. When the private history of the time comes to be written we shall possibly get to know something about it. It is only fair to say that after the burst of eloquence Mr. Cleveland showed himself through all the succeeding stages of the controversy just the same cool, sensible, conciliatory statesman that he had proved himself to be in his previous career. The message created great anger, and something like consternation in England, especially among Englishmen who did not know very much about the American Republic. In the United States it seems to have been taken quietly enough by the great mass of the population. To most Americans it was utterly impossible to accept with any seriousness the idea of a war between the great Republic and England on a question concerning the boundary-line between Venezuela and British Guiana. Most Englishmen, indeed, who gave themselves time to consider the subject coolly were of just the same opinion. In Washington, it was very likely that a good many politicians simply 'winked the other eye,' if we may be allowed to use that slang expression, when they read the thrilling lines in President Cleveland's message. On the other hand, a good deal of nonsense was written in this country about the extravagance and the arrogance of the Monroe doctrine. Now, as we have already

explained in these volumes, the Monroe doctrine, whether we of this generation approve or disapprove of it, was not the device of President Monroe, but was the device and the idea of the great English orator and statesman, George Canning. The Monroe doctrine was suggested by George Canning, and was urged on President Monroe as a fitting means of preventing the fallen dynasties of the European continent from establishing themselves on the shores of either America. It was for this purpose that Canning called in the New World, as he put it in his immortal phrase, to redress the balance of the Old.

The Monroe doctrine simply declared that the United States could not regard with approval any attempt on the part of a foreign Power to set up a monarchy on American soil against the wish of the people who occupied that part of the country. The United States never interfered with the Empire of Brazil, and never dreamed of interfering with the Imperial occupation of Canada. But when the Emperor Napoleon III. endeavoured to force an empire by sheer strength of arms on the people of Mexico, who were prepared to fight in the last ditch against it, then the United States acted on George Canning's principle, and told the Emperor that it would be better for him if he were to withdraw his French troops from Mexico, which, of course, he promptly did. The Monroe doctrine is, on the whole, a very reasonable and practical principle, alike for the United States and for foreign Powers. It was adopted in the interests of England

as well as in those of the American Republic. It simply makes it clear, in the firmest and frankest way, that there are enterprises which the great Republic cannot allow to be attempted on American soil.

After the first alarm created by President Cleveland's message had subsided, negotiations at once set in for a peaceful adjustment of the whole dispute. Lord Salisbury, the English Prime Minister, appears to have acted with great good-temper and prudence. He pointed out that there were certain questions in the controversy which England could not agree to leave to any arbitration; for, of course, every conceivable plan of arbitration must have some limits assigned to it; but he showed himself perfectly willing to enter into any reasonable scheme for arbitration. Lord Salisbury, it is mere justice to say, abstained from the use of any words which might tend to inflame the temper of people on either side of the ocean. In truth, the vast majority on both sides were convinced that the dispute could be easily settled, and were only anxious to have it settled as quickly as possible. Therefore the negotiations soon began to take shape, and the agreement grew and grew, until at last it came to take in, not merely the terms of settlement as between British Guiana and Venezuela, but the terms of settlement concerning any future dispute which might arise between Great Britain and the United States. For many years such a scheme had been talked of and discussed. International arbitration had averted a war between Great Britain and the

American Republic on the question of the 'Alabama' claims. Many Englishmen were somewhat sore about that settlement, on the plain, rough ground that Great Britain had had the worst of it. But all the cooler minds in England admitted that a certain class of English politicians and English society had brought England into a serious trouble, and that she was well and honourably out of the difficulty.

The Arbitration Treaty as suggested consists of fifteen articles. Its preamble sets out the desire of the Governments of Great Britain and the United States to continue and consolidate the friendly relations so happily existing, and to 'consecrate by treaty' the principle of international arbitration. By the first article of the treaty the high contracting parties agree to submit to arbitration, in accordance with the provisions and subject to the limitations of the agreement, all questions in dispute between them which may have failed to adjust themselves by diplomatic negotiation. The second article deals with all 'pecuniary claims or groups of claims' which do not in the aggregate exceed one hundred thousand pounds in amount, and do not involve any territorial dispute, and sets out that all such claims shall be dealt with and decided by what is called an arbitral tribunal, constituted as provided in the next following article. The words 'or groups of pecuniary claims' are understood to mean claims by one or more persons arising out of the same transactions, or involving the same issues of law and of fact. This, of course, although a very useful arrangement, is not

one that could be considered to have any great international importance. We do not live in the days of Don Pacifico or of Monsieur Jecker any longer, and even in those days it would be hardly possible to imagine England and the United States going to war about a group of pecuniary claims which did not exceed one hundred thousand pounds in amount. The third article declares that each of the contracting parties shall nominate one arbitrator who shall be a jurist of repute, and the two arbitrators so nominated shall, within two months of their nomination, select an umpire. In case they should fail to do so within a certain limit of time, the umpire is to be appointed by agreement between the members for the time being of the Supreme Court of the United States and the members for the time being of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of Great Britain and Ireland, each nominating body deciding by a majority. Then, again, all pecuniary claims or groups of claims which shall exceed one hundred thousand pounds in amount, and all other matters in dispute with regard to which either of the contracting parties shall have claims against the other under treaty or otherwise, provided the disputes do not involve the determination of territorial claims, shall be dealt with and decided by an arbitral tribunal constituted for the purpose. Any controversy—and now we come to the really important part of the question—which shall involve the determination of territorial claims shall be submitted, according to the sixth article, to a tribunal composed of six members,

three of whom shall be judges of the Supreme Court of the United States, or justices of circuit courts, to be nominated by the President of the United States, and the other three to be judges of the British Supreme Court of Judicature, or members of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, to be nominated by Her Britannic Majesty, whose awards by a majority of not less than five to one shall be final. If, however, the award shall be made by less than the prescribed majority, it shall be final all the same unless either Power shall, within three months after the announcement of the award, protest against the decision, in which case the award shall be of no account. But in any case, and even with the protest made by one of the parties, or if the members of the arbitral tribunal should prove to be equally divided, there shall be no recourse to hostile measures of any description until the mediation of one or more friendly Powers has been invited by one or both of the high contracting parties. The eighth article of the treaty sets out that when the question involved concerns a particular State or Territory of the American Republic, the President may appoint a judicial officer of such State or Territory to be one of the arbitrators; and that where the question involved concerns any British colony or possession, Her Majesty the Queen may appoint a judicial officer of that colony or possession to be one of the arbitrators. Territorial claims in the treaty are, according to Article 9, to include all claims to territory, and all other claims involving questions of servitude, rights

of navigation, of access to fisheries, and all rights and interests necessary to the control and enjoyment of territory claimed by either of the contracting parties. The tenth article declares that if in any case the nominating bodies shall fail to agree upon an umpire, the umpire shall be appointed by His Majesty the King of Sweden and Norway. But either of the parties to the treaty may at any time give notice to the other that, by reason of material changes in the conditions which existed at the date of the treaty, it is of opinion that a substitute for His Majesty should be chosen. The substitute is then to be agreed upon between the parties. The treaty is to remain in force for five years from the date of its coming into operation, and, further, until the expiration of twelve months after either of the contracting parties shall have given notice to the other of its desire to terminate the arrangement.

It can hardly be necessary to point out to the readers of these pages the immense, the inestimable importance of such an agreement between the British Empire and the American Republic. The mere fact that any such arrangement was signed by the British Ambassador at Washington, Sir Julian Pauncefote, and Mr. Olney, the then Republican Secretary of State, marks a most important epoch in the history of the world. Two friendly peoples, of the same race and the same language, which have gone so far as that can never get back to the old barbaric principle which makes war possible about every question of boundary or trumpery dispute over what the treaty

calls groups of pecuniary claims. In the message from President Cleveland which commended the treaty to the Senate the whole arrangement, satisfactory as it promised to be, was pointed to in modest language as only 'a long step in the right direction, as embodying a practical working plan by which disputes between the two peoples might reach a peaceful adjustment as a matter of course and ordinary routine.' Nothing could be more important than the sense and significance of these words. The treaty may be imperfect; it may have to be amended, expanded, limited, but its justification and its glory are set forth in President Cleveland's words, that it embodies a practical working plan by which disputes between the two peoples might reach a peaceful adjustment as a matter of course and ordinary routine. This is, as it seems to us, the highest point to which international civilisation has yet reached. That the representatives of a great Empire and a great Republic should have been authorised to agree on an arrangement for such a purpose is an event of which all civilised States in the world will have to take account. We shall have to refer later on to the fortunes of the treaty, but it is impossible to suppose that the spirit of the proposed agreement will not carry a wholesome contagion with it to all the great States. The greatest Empire in the world and the greatest Republic in the world have come together in a common desire to set up the principle of arbitration as the natural and immediate settlement of disputes. It will be observed that the articles of the treaty meant no

limitation as regards the questions to be submitted to arbitrament. Every subject of dispute whatever that can arise between the great Empire and the great Republic is in the first instance to be submitted to arbitration between the two States. If, after an experiment in such arbitration, the two States cannot agree, then, before any question of war can possibly arise, the subject in dispute is to be referred to the judgment of some quite impartial umpire. Of course, nobody in his senses could suppose that war could be for ever rendered impossible between the British Empire and the United States of America by any treaty; but we do not measure the importance of any agreement simply by the fact that it does not make war absolutely impossible. No agreement made on earth can ever make war absolutely impossible; but we could be well content with an arrangement which made war between the two greatest States in the world absolutely impossible in the first instance. It would be quite enough for all reasonable human beings to know, that in any case of dispute between Great Britain and the United States there was to be no resort to war until several courses of pacific arrangement had to be tried and found wanting. The announcement of the proposed treaty was received with the most cordial welcome by the general body of the public on both sides of the Atlantic. Some few critics on this side of the ocean asked what was to be done in the event of the United States summoning Great Britain to withdraw from the Dominion of Canada. Is that a question, it was

asked, which Great Britain could possibly submit to arbitration? The question, of course, was utterly absurd. The United States Republic is not altogether peopled by lunatics. Many years ago, when the late Robert Lowe (afterwards Lord Sherbrooke) was discussing in the House of Commons some question as to the privilege of the sovereign, he admitted that the sovereign had a right to make a peer of every cobbler in the country, and he put the question as to what would happen if the Queen were to make every cobbler in the country a peer; and he made the pithy and sensible answer: 'I don't know. I don't want to know. Nobody wants to know.'

Nothing could be more effective in its way. All privileges, all agreements, all contracts, are founded on the assumption that they are conferred upon or made between sane persons, and not Bedlamites. Nobody knows, nobody wants to know, what would happen if the United States were to call upon the British Government to vacate her colonies in Canada. Nobody wants to know what would happen if the sovereign of England were to put in a claim to be declared President of the great American Republic. These are absurdities which are outside the practical consideration of rational human beings. Any agreement between the Imperial Government of England and the Republican Government of the United States is accepted as an agreement between sober statesmen and sane populations. Some few Englishmen, not well read in the history of the question, objected to the treaty on the ground that it formally recognised

the Monroe doctrine. As we have pointed out already more than once, the Monroe doctrine was the inspiration of English statesmanship. It was recommended to President Monroe in the interests of England as well as of America. It has nothing whatever to do with the British colonisation of Canada, and could not possibly be twisted by any perverted ingenuity of man into a reason for a quarrel or an arbitration on such a subject. It merely announced to the world that the American Republic could not see without disfavour the establishment of any monarchical system in North or South America against the will of the inhabitants of the place where the monarchy was to be set up. Such a principle was well worthy of the English statesmanship which suggested the doctrine, and of the American statesmanship which accepted and adopted it. No doubt the Treaty proposed between the British Government and the American President did, to a certain extent, recognise and affirm the Monroe doctrine.

But it is quite certain that no British sovereign will ever want to set up a monarchical government in North or South America against the wishes of the inhabitants; and it is also certain that no American Government will ever undertake to interfere with any form of institution which any population of South America may choose to adopt for itself.

Nobody in his senses supposes that if Patagonia were inclined to transform itself into a monarchy the Government at Washington would take the slightest interest in the transformation. There are

British dominions in South America to which the Government at Washington has never dreamed of raising the faintest objection.

When the agreement was signed at Washington between Sir Julian Pauncefote and Mr. Olney, Mr. Olney's secretary, it is stated, kept the pen which had signed the document as a great historical relic. He was well advised in doing so. The key of the Bastile lay, and no doubt still lies, on the table of George Washington's house at Mount Vernon. The pen which signed the agreement between the British Empire and the American Republic might well have a place beside it.

In the closing days of 1895 the attention of England and of the world in general was suddenly directed to the Transvaal Republic, in South Africa. It will be remembered that after the defeat of British arms at Majuba Hill the Imperial Government had entered into an agreement, described as the Convention of London, with the Government of the South African Republic, which is commonly called the Government of the Transvaal. By this Convention England retained a certain suzerainty over the Transvaal State. England undertook to protect the Transvaal from foreign aggression, and the Transvaal agreed to make no treaty with a foreign State until England had been consulted in the first instance. There has been some misunderstanding lately as to the terms of this part of the agreement. Many people thought that the Transvaal was absolutely prohibited from entering into negotiations for any

treaty with a foreign Power unless England gave her consent. This, however, was not exactly the fact. It was agreed on both sides that, in the event of the Transvaal statesmen desiring to make a treaty with a foreign Power, the terms of the treaty should be communicated to England, and if the Imperial Government did not within a certain specified time raise any objection to the arrangement, the treaty might then be concluded. This, perhaps, does not seem a very important difference, but it might have come to be important in the early part of 1896, when there was much agitation about the possible intervention of Germany. The English public had forgotten to trouble itself very much about the Transvaal until 'Dr. Jameson's ride' and its consequences were announced in the closing days of 1895. Dr. Jameson was the administrator of the Chartered Company in South Africa, and he had led a raid from the Imperial Crown Colony of Bechuanaland across the frontier of the Transvaal Republic, a State which was not only at peace with England and on good terms with England, but of which England was, as we have shown, to a certain extent the suzerain Power.

It is necessary to go back a little in order to explain the causes of the raid, which created so much astonishment all over the world. In and around the Transvaal State was a large population gathered from all the adventurous countries in the world, who had settled there—had swooped down upon the land when it became known that the soil

was rich with gold and diamonds. The original occupants of the Transvaal—we mean, of course, the occupants who came from abroad and settled there; the native populations seem to count for nothing—were the Boers. The history of the Boers is curious, interesting, and in a certain sense pathetic. The Boers have sprung on the one side from the Dutch Protestants, and on the other side from the French Huguenot exiles. These men and women had been driven from their native homes by oppressive laws, and had found their way many generations ago to South Africa, which was then just beginning to be opened up to colonisation. The Boer has succeeded in making a race and a people of his own. He lives apart and unto himself. He is not proud of his descent from the Dutch, or from the French Huguenot. He cares nothing about his ancestors. He cares nothing about the history and the traditions of Europe. He only wants to live his own life and to be let alone. He is as peculiar a type in his own way, although it is a very different way, as is the Bedouin with his camel and his spear, who may be seen to this hour, as he was in the Bible days, outside the walls of Jerusalem. The Boer is religious, pious —narrow-minded in his religion and in his piety. Like many others who left Europe to escape persecution, he is by no means above inflicting religious disqualification and penalty upon those who differ from him on questions of religious faith. We shall presently see that the question of religious faith had a good deal to do with the troubles that broke out

in the Transvaal Republic. In the political government of that State no share whatever was allowed to anyone who did not profess the Protestant religion. In Africa, as we all know, more especially in South Africa, there are Africans and Afrikanders. The African, of course, is the dark-skinned native; the Afrikander is the settler from Europe, or America, or Australia. The Afrikanders, differing in many things, are in general agreement as to one thing—the right and the necessity of putting down the African as much as possible. The Transvaal State made him a beast of burden, and nothing else. The Transvaal State, moreover, did not want any Afrikanders but their own people. The Boer did not care about getting rich. It had not occurred to him that there were any means of getting rich. He was content to live upon the produce of his flocks and his herds and his fields. He almost lived in the saddle, with his rifle in his hand to kill the game and keep off the wild beasts and the hostile natives; and he had shown at Majuba Hill what a Boer could do from behind a rock with his rifle in his hand. His one great terror was of English domination. Wherever he set up for himself, it seemed to him that England was determined to follow him, to surround him, and to prevent him from carrying on the sort of life that suited him best. Again and again the Boer population changed its ground in order to escape being pressed by the English—from Cape Colony or Natal, or any of the other States which admitted the sovereignty of the Imperial Government. It is only

doing the Boer simple justice to say that, like Byron's Manfred, he wished to find the desolation, but not to make it. The Boers are not a social people, even amongst themselves. As a rule, in the Transvaal State a man's family make up his world, and he is not particularly anxious for the society of his fellow-beings. He is very steady; he is very sober; he is very religious after his own fashion; and he has all the courage of his Dutch ancestors. Now, when it was made known through the world that in and around the Transvaal State there was gold to be had in abundance, and the adventurers from all the earth swarmed upon the place, the Boer and his peculiar characteristics came into sharp contrast with the ways of what is called civilisation. There were two great and conspicuous figures in South Africa at that time. One was President Kruger, and the other was Mr. Cecil Rhodes. President Kruger was a Boer of the Boers, an idealised type of the Boer creation. He was undoubtedly a man of great ability, of absolute integrity, firm as a rock wherever what he recognised as a principle was concerned, rough and rugged in appearance, blunt in manner, but with a certain characteristic humour, and with a clear and statesmanlike mind. He was a sort of Afrikander Abraham Lincoln or Peter Stuyvesant. Mr. Cecil Rhodes was an Englishman, educated at one of the great English universities, who had gone out when young to Cape Colony for the benefit of his health, and found his way there into politics and into finance, and became Prime Minister of the Colony, and was in every way

its foremost man. Now, we mean nothing disparaging to Mr. Cecil Rhodes when we say that he was above all things an adventurer by temperament and by career. He was an adventurer as some of Walter Raleigh's compatriots and colleagues were adventurers; for there was a good deal of practical genius in some of Raleigh's compatriots and colleagues, and, eager as they were to extend the empire and the glory of England, they were not unwilling at the same time to make money out of the enterprise. Mr. Cecil Rhodes might undoubtedly, in a certain sense, be called a man of genius. He founded the Chartered Company, which received Imperial sanction, and was in itself like the founding of a State. A vast territory was called Rhodesia after his name, and he became—we cannot describe it otherwise—the chief and the dictator and the idol of all the mixed and various adventurous population who streamed into South Africa, led by the longing to make money. Plutarch himself could not have devised a more striking contrast of portraits than that presented by the picture of President Kruger and the picture of Mr. Cecil Rhodes. Power, position, greatness, money: these were of absolutely no account to President Kruger, and they were the natural pursuit of Mr. Cecil Rhodes.

The influence of Mr. Rhodes grew and grew. The Chartered Company was in itself a commanding power. Whether the Imperial Government ought in our days to recognise the establishment of a Chartered Company at all is a question which must before long

come up for the consideration of the Imperial Parliament. England had in the end to get rid of her 'Chartered Company,' her 'John Company,' in India. She will very soon have to ask herself what she is going to do with her Chartered Company in South Africa. At all events, it was quite certain that, sooner or later, the influence of President Kruger and the influence of Mr. Cecil Rhodes must come into collision. As Prévost Paradol said of France and Prussia more than a quarter of a century ago, if you start two express trains from different points along the same line, the encounter is only a question of hours. Great controversy soon arose between the Boer Government and those who were called the Uitlanders, or Outlanders—that is to say, the settlers in and around the Transvaal State who had come there to make money. It is quite likely, it may even be taken for granted, that President Kruger and his colleagues were unduly suspicious of the Outlanders. They were far too apt to identify the aims of the Outlanders with some desire on the part of England to conquer the whole country and obtain possession of it. The truth is, that not one Englishman in a thousand, after the feeling about Majuba Hill had cooled off, felt the slightest desire that his Government should conquer and annex the Transvaal State, and not one Outlander out of ten thousand cared very much about English annexation of the territory. The Outlanders had streamed into South Africa, as they had streamed into California and into Australia many years before, with the sole object of

making money, and settling down to be happy in the spending of it. A vast number of the Outlanders lived within the limits of the Transvaal State. They largely outnumbered the Boer population, even in the State itself. The great majority of them cared nothing whatever about any supposed desire on the part of England to take possession of the Transvaal. But they began to complain, and with a certain reasonableness in their complaint, that the laws of the Republic were very unfair towards foreign settlers. The foreign settler was allowed no rights of citizenship. Now it is quite certain that no State allows to incomers an immediate and matter-of-fact right of citizenship. Even in the great American Republic, where, as Lowell says, the latch at the door may be lifted by the poorest child of Adam's kin, the emigrant is not allowed to walk into the country and become a citizen and a voter all at once. He has to put in a certain period of residence, or a certain amount of active service. But in the United States the prospect is clear. Every immigrant who enters the States knows that he has only to pass through a certain period of probation to become naturalised in the regular way, and then he is a citizen and a voter, just as if he were a born American. But in the Transvaal Republic there was no period of probation. A stranger was, as the constitution stood, to be a stranger always, and only in the latest years was there the faintest hope held out that this condition of things might be altered at some future time, and that the settler might be

recognised as a resident and a citizen. The case on both sides could be very simply and clearly stated. The Boers said, 'We do not want any of you among us. We have broken up our camp and shifted our ground more than once to escape from foreign interlopers. We do not want to have the mineral resources of the country developed. We do not care if they were never developed. You have now become the majority, we admit, even within our own frontier lines, but you shall not make laws for us, and disturb our familiar and cherished arrangements.' That, roughly speaking, was the case for the Boers. The case for the Outlanders was equally clear. They said, 'We are developing the resources of the country; we are making all this region, yours as well as ours, rich and prosperous. We are drawing the attention of the whole civilised world to its vast resources. We have created a new country, and we claim to be allowed to take part in the government of it.' One thing will probably seem clear to the unconcerned and impartial observer—that the Outlanders will be sure to have their way in the end. They are, for the most part, men of energy, of enterprise, of courage, experience, and resource, and it would be impossible to keep such men, even were they but a minority, from having some share in the government of any country in which they choose to settle. The Boers could not even plead the right of long possession so far as the Transvaal region was concerned. Their ownership was but a thing of the day before yesterday, if we may be allowed to put the matter in

this easy and colloquial form. President Kruger would certainly have been well advised if he had frankly admitted that there was a claim to be made for the Outlanders, and that those of them who actually lived in the Transvaal must be allowed, on some conditions or other, to become citizens and voters there.

All this controversy raised a great agitation over the whole of South Africa. The Boers, no doubt, got it into their minds that the object of the Outlanders was to take possession of the Transvaal, and annex it in some form to the British Empire, with Mr. Cecil Rhodes as a sort of dictator. How far that idea was founded upon accurate knowledge and on observation it is yet too early to say. In the meantime, there can be no doubt that preparations were actively made for an invasion of the Transvaal in the interests of what was called the Reform cause. How far the ruling spirits of the Chartered Company had connived at, inspired, or helped such an enterprise is not yet quite known. Dr. Jameson, who held high position in the Company, and who had an inborn love of soldiering, put himself suddenly at the head of a little army, some of whose officers were men in the regular military service of England, with the avowed purpose of crossing the Transvaal frontier-land in order to compel President Kruger and his Government to do justice to the claims of the settlers. Some mysterious telegraph seems also to have reached the hands of Dr. Jameson and his co-partners, telling them that their instant interposition was needed in order to

secure the safety of the wives and children of settlers in Johannesburg, the great business city of the Republic. The news of the meditated raid suddenly reached this country. Mr. Chamberlain was Secretary of State for the Colonies, and he certainly acted with all the energy and promptitude that might have been expected from a man endowed with his force of character. He at once telegraphed to the High Commissioner of South Africa, Sir Hercules Robinson (now Lord Rosmead), authorising him to take every step in his power to prevent the invasion. Dr. Jameson refused to be stopped on his march, and he endeavoured to go his way; but he was utterly defeated by the Boer forces, and he and his officers and men had to surrender, and were made prisoners. President Kruger acted with wise clemency, and spared the lives of all the invaders, allowing the leaders to be sent off to England in order to be tried here for an act of rebellion against the authority of the Crown. Dr. Jameson became for a time a sort of popular hero with certain classes of persons in England. But, the more the whole subject came to be looked into and thought over, the more it became clear that his action was rash, impolitic, lawless, and disastrous. Nobody suspected him of any evil purpose or of any selfish purpose whatever. He was a brave man, and was not in any sense a money-seeking adventurer. There was, however, a strong doubt in many minds whether he had not been made the instrument of more self-seeking and unscrupulous men, who were glad to urge him to run any risk, in

the hope that England and the Transvaal might again become engaged in war, and that the complete annexation of the South African Republic might thus be accomplished. The prisoners in due time were tried and found guilty, and sentences of imprisonment, not very long in any instance, were passed. Dr. Jameson's health had suffered so much that it was found necessary to release him after a few months of incarceration, and nobody in England or in Africa was sorry that he had been dealt with in a kindly spirit.

Of course the whole subject was a question of debate in the House of Commons. The Government agreed that a committee of that House should be appointed to inquire into the whole chapter of history and report upon it, and it was generally understood that one of the most important subjects of inquiry was to be the part which had been played by the Chartered Company. The Chartered Company had been set up by royal warrant as a body controlling its own soldiers for defensive purposes. Given a chartered company at all, under such conditions, it was clear that it must be allowed so much of military power. It was surrounded by hostile races, and it had, in fact, to carry on several fierce wars. It was in these struggles that Dr. Jameson won his repute as a leader of men in battle. For a long time, all but unknown to the vast majority of Englishmen at home, the Chartered Company was writing out a new volume of history with a big pen, sometimes, it must be allowed, dipped in very red ink. But it

certainly never was intended when the charter of the Company was given that the armed force it was to manage should be used for the purpose of invading a friendly State. The good faith of the Imperial Government, the honour of the Empire, were felt to be involved in the question whether the Chartered Company had or had not authorised, or backed up, or deliberately connived at the extraordinary expedition conducted by Dr. Jameson.

The committee was decidedly a strong court of inquiry. It contained among its members some of the most distinguished representatives of every party and section and group in the House of Commons. Meantime a whole flood of literature had spread over the doings in South Africa. The newspapers of the world wrote every day on the subject. Pamphlets and volumes came out without intermission—each pamphlet and each volume by somebody who claimed an especial right to know the facts of every incident and the meaning of every fact. The new Poet Laureate, Mr. Alfred Austin, who had succeeded Alfred Tennyson in office and in name, at all events, came out with a poem in honour of Dr. Jameson; but it is only fair to say that he did not profess to have any personal knowledge of what he was rhyming about. It may be that he was not the first Poet Laureate who glorified some military achievement about the rights and wrongs of which he did not pretend to have any knowledge whatever. But again let it be said, in justice to Mr. Alfred Austin, that while greater Laureates than he had only had to

glorify successful undertakings, he of his own motion smote the chords of the lyre in honour of an enterprise which had been an utter failure, a mere miscalculation—not only a defeat, but a discomfiture.

Some time later on, when people have leisure to think impartially over the whole of this chapter of South African history, it will certainly begin to be observed that, in all written or said upon the subject, in the House of Commons, in the Parliament of Cape Colony, in the Blue Books, in the newspapers, hardly any account is taken of the position of the African native. He appears to reckon for nothing in the whole controversy. The Boers, as we have said, made him a mere beast of burden. The Chartered Company seem to have regarded him as if he were some pestilent interloper, who must be got out of the way as quickly as possible, by whatever process of removal. Perhaps, when a full and calm inquiry comes to be made into the whole history of South Africa in our recent days, it may be found that in the unceasing wars between the settlers and the natives the settlers were not always in the right, and the poor benighted heathens were not invariably in the wrong. Perhaps, too, it may come to be thought that the settlers might have done better, even among themselves, if they had been more considerate for the ignorant, dark-skinned native populations.

It would not be possible to close this part of the chapter of history without saying something about the message of congratulation sent by the German Emperor to President Kruger on the defeat of Dr. Jameson and

his raiders. Something too much, we think, was made of this by the English press and public in general. Obviously it was an indiscretion. The German Emperor telegraphed to President Kruger his congratulations on the victory which the President's soldiers had obtained over the invaders. Now there was not the slightest necessity for the German Emperor to send any message of this kind. All civilised States are supposed to be on friendly terms with each other, and every civilised State is understood to be glad that trouble has been averted from every other civilised State. But it was assumed in England, very naturally, that the German Emperor's telegram implied some special interest in the welfare of the Transvaal Republic, and some special objection to any danger to that Republic coming from Englishmen. Therefore the message of the German Emperor was regarded almost all over England as a compliment to President Kruger, and a snub to the English Government. There was, of course, some reason for such an opinion. No other leader of a State had offered any congratulation to President Kruger. The Emperor of Austria had expressed no opinion. The President of the French Republic had not thought it necessary to send any message of congratulation. The President of the United States had occupied himself with his own business, and had not felt it his duty to convey any special congratulations to his brother-President, the Chief of the Transvaal Republic. The Emperor of Russia had been silent. The King of Sweden and Norway had made no

remark; and the Sultan of Turkey, much engrossed, no doubt, with other affairs more intimately concerning himself and his dynasty, had uttered no words of gratulation or condolence. Therefore it was not unreasonable that the English press and the English public should have attached some special significance to the message addressed by the German Emperor to President Kruger. There had been troubles already between England and Germany in South Africa, and the message of the German Emperor seemed to many people here to have been purposely meant to accentuate the bearing of those troubles. The writer of this History is not inclined to interpret the matter in that way. The German Emperor has a peculiar personality of his own. The great German poet, Schiller, makes the hero of one of his finest plays say, 'If I were cool and cautious I should not be William Tell.' If the present German Emperor were cool and cautious he could not possibly be the sort of man that he has shown himself in political life. An English writer has described him as an emperor taken out of the second part of 'Faust.' He delights in surprises, in acting on impulses, and in following the bent of any sudden inclination. But it is hardly possible to believe that he had any hostile purpose to England when he sent his message to President Kruger. He is a grandson of Queen Victoria, and he has never really shown any want of kindly feeling towards the English people. But he is fond of making sensational speeches, he is fond of writing letters, and fond of sending telegraphic

messages, and to one who has such a passion much must be excused. The message to President Kruger made a great sensation for the moment; but when English people began to pull themselves together, they agreed amongst each other that it was only one more of the odd performances of the young German Emperor.

In the meanwhile the treaty for arbitration between England and the United States undoubtedly hung fire. It came at an unlucky time. It came at a season when the Presidential Election was going on, and when the minds of men in the States were narrowed down into mere partisan issues. There is still in the United States, as everyone knows, a considerable mass of the population among whom, after all that has come and gone, a lingering dislike of Great Britain remains. No such feeling exists among the largest proportion of the American population, but still the feeling finds representation enough in the United States Senate to encourage a great deal of obstruction on the part of the minority of the senators. The treaty of arbitration was, therefore, obstructed for a time. It may be said, without the slightest chance of contradiction, that the intelligence of the United States, through their public men, their newspapers, and their people, was absolutely in favour of the treaty. A principle so far supported on both sides of the ocean cannot possibly be long prevented from coming into agreement and into action.

CHAPTER XX.

DEATH—AND DYNAMITE.

THE year 1896 dealt devastation among celebrities of all orders. In its earlier days died Lord Leighton, the President of the Royal Academy. Lord Leighton had undoubtedly maintained with ease and force the high position of the British painter's art. His style was peculiar. There is, perhaps, no other word to describe it so well as to call it, in the Latin sense, exquisite. Perhaps it wanted strength; at all events, that want is certainly the fault which would be found with it by those who are inclined to underestimate Leighton's art. But it had beauty of outline and colour and tone. It was full of poetic suggestion. It brought out all the lovelier touches and tints of life; and if it did not deal with the great emotions and passions of humanity, it at least wrought with consummate skill the work which the artist had set out for himself to do. Some of his earlier pictures, especially that of Clytemnestra from the battlements of Argos watching for the beacon-fires which are to announce the return of Agamemnon, did seem to convey the idea of that strength of art which not everyone was willing to regard as the possession of

Lord Leighton. The painter, however, probably understood his own limitations as nobody else could have understood them, and kept himself to his own path in art, to illustrate the poetic and beautiful. He was a man of rare accomplishments. As an ornamental speaker, if we may use that phrase, he ranked among the best in England. The work was elaborate, no doubt, and was even thought overlaboured by many critics. But if a man can turn out a beautiful speech, or a beautiful picture, or a beautiful statue, it does not much matter by what process, quick or slow, the accomplishment has been achieved. Lord Leighton was a sculptor as well as a painter, and could make statues almost as successfully as he could make pictures or speeches. He was a singularly handsome man, of courtly manner, who had a charming word for everybody he met, and who could talk to most continental visitors in their own tongues. When he died there was some little doubt as to his successor in the President's chair of the Royal Academy. There was no doubt whatever as to the merits of the man who ought to be chosen as his successor. We believe we have good authority for saying that as to the merits of the man there never was the slightest doubt among the Royal Academicians. Sir John Millais was beyond all dispute the greatest English painter left after Leighton's death, and in the opinion of many well-qualified critics he had carried English art in painting higher than ever Leighton had done. But there were some doubts and difficulties about the election.

Millais was in failing health; his sight was much impaired; nothing was more certain than the fact that his great career was drawing to a close; and the outer public wondered whether there would be any use in electing a President of the Royal Academy who could not possibly fulfil any of the active duties of his office. The Royal Academy, however, decided, generously and wisely, that the position which he had long been earning must be offered to Sir John Millais, and that, whether he lived or whether he died, his place in English art must be recognised, not for his sake merely, but for the honour of the Academy itself.

So Sir John Millais was elected President of the Royal Academy; and in August 1896, too soon after his election, he justified all the melancholy forebodings, and died before his time, but not too soon for his fame. He was succeeded in the place of President of the Royal Academy by Mr. Edward Poynter—Sir Edward Poynter, as he naturally became.

Art had lost much also by the death of Mr. George Richmond. Later on the gaiety of nations was eclipsed by the fate of Mr. George Du Maurier. Du Maurier stood amongst the very highest of the artists who illustrated in genial satire that form of British humour which *Punch* has introduced to the world. It is not a scathing form of humour. It does not deal much with those terrible problems of social life which so many writers of later years have been thrusting under our eyes with futile persistency, as if we could possibly settle them in any case; but

it dealt with what we may call the lighter pleasantries and shams and follies of social life, and it did its work—its own work—to absolute perfection. The place of George Du Maurier in English art will be hard indeed to fill. It is curious to remember that by far his greatest public success was made by a story to which he himself attached no manner of literary importance. He threw off the story of 'Trilby' because it embodied and illustrated some delightful memories of his as a young student-painter in the Quartier Latin of Paris. It was undoubtedly a pretty, a touching, and a charming story, but he himself and most of his friends were amazed at the hold it took on the mind of the general public. In England its success, although surprising, was nothing to the fame which it made in the United States. No book in our time since the days of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe and 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' ever had the same run in America, where one might have thought that the very fact of poor Trilby sitting as a model for the 'altogether' would have alarmed all the households of New England. Du Maurier took this success with a blending of amazement and composure. It did not put him out for a moment. It never occurred to him to believe that as a novelist he was the equal of Dickens and of Thackeray. He was a good deal amused, not a little annoyed, but on the whole quite master of himself. No man could have been more loved by his friends than George Du Maurier was. No one felt jealous of or grudged him his great

success. There was nothing that fortune could do for George Du Maurier in the way of good-luck which would not have gladdened the hearts of all who knew him.

In January 1896 died Mr. Hugh Childers, who had been a colleague of Mr. Gladstone in several Liberal Administrations. Mr. Childers was a man of great ability, who only failed to rise to his full level because he had not always the physical health which enables a statesman to endure with ease and success the stress and strain of Cabinet office. Like Robert Lowe, afterwards Lord Sherbrooke, he had made a reputation for himself in Australia before he came into the House of Commons. His first remarkable speech in that House was made on the question of the ballot, in which he gave his Australian experiences in a manner that made it evident to the House of Commons that a new, a clear-headed, a strong, and a capable man had come into the assembly. He rose steadily in the House. He held various offices. He became First Lord of the Admiralty; he became War Minister; he became Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was an excellent 'all-round man,' and he served as a member of every Liberal Administration until, as we have mentioned in a former chapter, his state of health compelled him, or condemned him, to seek for rest. The final rest came not very long afterwards. His last public service was conferred when he acted as chairman of the Commission appointed by the Conservative Government to inquire into the system of Irish

taxation. Mr. Childers had unnumbered friends, and enemies that could not be numbered, for the plain reason that they did not exist. Nor was the fact that he had no enemies owing to any lack of force of character in him, for he followed his own way thoroughly and strenuously when he saw it; and everyone recognised the fact that he was sincere and above reproach, and he died regretted by all the great parties in the State.

The literary world had to lament the loss of Mr. William Morris, one of the sweetest poets and one of the truest artists of modern English life. We have long since borne tribute to his genius in these volumes. We have quite lately mentioned his name as one of the men best qualified for the position of Poet Laureate, so far as imagination and melody were concerned, but as a man who certainly would not himself have cared about or accepted the office. He had done much for English art and for English life in many ways; and, indeed, it would be hardly possible to imagine a career more honourable and more exalted, within its limits, than that of William Morris. Mr. Coventry Patmore, author of 'The Angel in the House,' died at the age of seventy-three in 1896, still loved as a poet by 'those who in their spring-time knew him,' and reverenced even by a younger generation, with whom, as a rule, the works of past poets do not count for much. 'Tom Hughes' passed away in 1896, once famous through all the English-speaking world as the author of 'Tom Brown's Schooldays.' There was a time when no name in

England was more popular than that of Thomas Hughes. He was a great Radical reformer, and he sat in the House of Commons for many years, and he manfully stood up for the cause of the North in the American Civil War. Of late years he had faded almost out of recollection. He accepted the post of a county-court judge, and he seemed to have forgotten all his early fame. Certainly, he made no effort to recover it, and the news of his death reminded most people that he once had lived.

The death of Dr. Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury, in October 1896, gave an occasion for the revival of a once-famous, long-forgotten controversy. Dr. Benson at the time of his death was staying with Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden, and actually died in Mr. Gladstone's pew in the parish church. The controversy had nothing to do with the Archbishop of Canterbury himself. Dr. Benson had gone through his work as archbishop quietly and steadily. Everything that he had done was done well, but without show, or pretence, or fireworks of any kind. The beautiful grounds of Lambeth Palace, and the valuable collection of books which the Palace contained, were put freely at the service of anyone who had the faintest claim to admission and recognition. But Dr. Benson was not a man in any way to magnify his office, and he simply attended to his work and went quietly on. An irreverent writer in a London daily paper once described him in a leading article as 'the Archbishop of Canterbury, better known as the father of the author of "Dodo"': a caricaturist

novel of London social life. The controversy arose, or was revived, when the successor to Dr. Benson came to be nominated. Lord Salisbury gave the position of Archbishop of Canterbury to Dr. Temple, at that time Bishop of London, and formerly Bishop of Exeter. The nomination of Dr. Temple revived at once the old controversy about 'Essays and Reviews.' The present generation would probably otherwise have forgotten everything concerning 'Essays and Reviews.' The book which went by this name was written by six clergymen and one layman of the Church of England, and was published in the March of 1860. The first essay in the volume was the work of Dr. Frederick Temple. There were seven essays and reviews. Professor Baden-Powell, Dr. Rowland Williams, Professor Jowett, Dr. H. B. Wilson, and Dr. Mark Pattison, with Mr. C. W. Goodwin, made up the authors of the collection. The book would not now seem one to excite much commotion. But at that time it created a vast excitement, and the ecclesiastical courts took up the question, and sentenced two of the writers to suspension from their clerical office for one year, with the payment of costs. The sentenced men, however, appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and the condemnation of the ecclesiastical courts was upset and abolished. The fact that the final decision remained in the hands of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council had a good deal of the influence which the Gorham case of many years before had had, in urging loyal members of the English Church to consider whether

under such conditions there could be a Church at all. We are not now discussing that question. We are only pointing to the undeniable fact that it did affect the minds of a great many thoroughly devoted Protestants. Who are the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council? we can well imagine some such Protestant asking. Do they even profess to be, have they even the remotest notion of professing to be, specially enlightened by any guidance from a higher world? Yet they have it in their power to settle the doctrines of the Church of England. There was a good deal of controversy raised when Dr. Temple was made Bishop of Exeter, and the whole question came up again when Lord Salisbury made him Archbishop of Canterbury. He was undoubtedly a man of great ability and of frank sincerity. He was somewhat rude in speech, and had little of the art which conciliates opponents by blandishment, or even by deference. Whatever he felt he strongly felt, and he had not the least idea of putting his thoughts into half-meaning or faintly modulated tones of meaning. If you did not like what he said, you were free to dislike it, and there an end. But about the integrity of the man and about his capacity to perform his duties there could not be the smallest question.

Some controversy was raised also with regard to his age. He was seventy-five years old when he was nominated Archbishop of Canterbury. The objection seems to us to be entirely absurd. Possibly in the military service and the civil service there may be occasion for a general and average rule as to the

time when a man had better retire from active life. But in the case of great functionaries like an archbishop, or a lord chancellor, or a commander-in-chief, it seems to us simply ridiculous to enforce such a rule. Dr. Temple was still eminently qualified for all the work that he could be called upon to do. If Count von Moltke had been withdrawn from active service according to the rule that is now favoured in England, the world would never have known that he was the greatest continental soldier since the First Napoleon. If Marshal Radetski had been withdrawn from public service at the age of Archbishop Temple, the world would never have known what a splendid soldier he was. We have already mentioned in these volumes, that if the ordinary rule had applied to Lord Palmerston, we should never have known that he was one of the greatest Parliamentary debaters of his time.

The English public in general approved of the appointment of Dr. Temple, and had forgotten much about the past controversy. Nobody now reads the volume of 'Essays and Reviews.' In any case, the scepticism of the volume was not an unwholesome curiosity, and merely tended, on the whole, to the recognition or the reasonable consideration of certain scientific questions which the world was bound to take into account. It was a question altogether between Broad Church and Narrow Church, and touched, so far as we can see, none of the issues that divide religious faith from unbelief. At the time when the 'Essays and Reviews' were published some

English Protestants wrote and stormed as though the whole world of religion were put on its trial, and must come to an end if the teaching of such writers were allowed to go free. The world went on, however, all the same. The Roman Catholics and the Nonconformists concerned themselves little or nothing about the teaching of 'Essays and Reviews.' Indeed, the whole principle and meaning of the English Established Church were identified with an admission of a certain freedom of individual opinion, and, where that freedom was not recognised, were bound up with the decisions of a court of law. Now the actual fact is, that amongst English Protestants the decision of the court of law is not, and never can be, recognised as binding on faith. One cannot help the decision. There it is. It may rebuke a bishop here, or chastise a curate there, on questions of belief, but no one really supposes that the courts of law have a direct inspiration from the powers above. Therefore the general public opinion of England approved of the elevation of Dr. Temple to the bishopric of Exeter, even while the question of controversy was still new; and more lately approved of his elevation by Lord Salisbury to the great place of Archbishop of Canterbury. Dr. Temple was known to be a hard-working man, who would never fail in any of the duties of his position, who might be trusted to work on as long as he felt equal to his business, and to give up the task the moment he felt unequal to its demands. Therefore Lord Salisbury's action met with very general approval, and an old

controversy, which at one time stirred up much bitterness, was regarded as revived anew, indeed, but also settled for ever, by the nomination of the new Archbishop of Canterbury.

The year 1896 was much darkened—as, indeed, the year before had been here—on the Continent by accounts of dynamite explosions. Some of the accounts were mere wild rumours, and some of them were only too cruel facts. It became evident that on the European continent there was a sudden recrudescence of the dynamite form of crime. In Paris, in other parts of France, in Spain, and in several other European countries the dynamite conspiracy broke out anew in full blaze. Of course, it could not possibly happen that the alarm caused by these atrocious crimes could long be kept out of England. About the middle of 1896 a thoroughly sensational report was started on the public. The Scotland Yard police, it was announced, had got hold of a tremendous plot, concocted by Irish Americans and continental Socialists, against everybody and everything. It was proclaimed that there were men in Antwerp, in one or two of the cities of Holland, and in London itself, who had entered into a conspiracy to shock civilisation by the greatest crimes of assassination the world had ever known. The Sovereign of England, the Czar of Russia, who was expected in England about that time, and all manner of imperial and royal personages, were to be assailed by this monstrous complot. Nor was this merely a rumour in the London papers. The English

police authorities at once proceeded to take measures for the capture and the punishment of the guilty miscreants. Some of them were in France, others were in Belgium and Holland, others, again, were in the United States. The allegations were chiefly founded on the discovery of a great mass of dynamite bombs in a house in Antwerp. One of the principal persons charged with this conspiracy was a man named Tynan, who was called in the Irish Fenian days by the title of 'Number One.' Tynan was an Irish American who, so far as the Irish Nationalist cause was concerned, had never had the slightest influence on this side of the Atlantic or the other. Most of the Irish Nationalists on this side regarded him as a sort of feather-headed buffoon, but there were amongst other men undoubtedly some darker suspicions about him. Tynan was then in France. An application was made for his extradition, which totally failed. The legal advisers of the French Government could find no reason to believe that any overt acts of his came within the meaning of the Extradition Treaty. There is a good deal of mistake in the popular mind about the operation of the ordinary extradition treaty. In the first place, it applies only to a distinctly specified class of offences. It does not apply to political offences strictly so-called at all. That is to say, that if in George Washington's time the American cause had been wholly defeated, and Washington had escaped to France, and if the Extradition Treaty had then been in existence, the French Government, any French

Government, would have absolutely refused to listen to any demand for the surrender of Washington. Then, again, the Extradition Treaty, which applies only to specified classes of offences, does not bind any State to hand over a foreign refugee unless there is evidence enough against him to warrant his being put on his trial in the country where he has found a shelter, supposing his offence were committed in that country. Let us take an easy illustration. A man in London is accused of committing murder, and he manages to escape to France. A demand is made by England for his extradition, and the French authorities require, before consenting to the demand, that there shall be sufficient evidence given, not, indeed, to convict him before a French court of law, but to warrant his being put on trial in the first instance before a French court of law. Nothing can be a more reasonable provision. Without such a provision the Extradition Treaty would be impossible for States like England and the American Republic, which do not want to shelter criminals, but which at the same time do not consent to hand over a man to the mercy of his enemies on no genuine evidence whatever. Then, again, another mistake is commonly made. A State is not bound to refuse to hand over a man charged with crime, even though the crime may not be proved in the first instance before a court of law. That State is not bound in honour or by the terms of the treaty to send such a man back to his own country, but she is free to do so if she thinks there are no substantial reasons for giving

him protection. That, too, is a perfectly reasonable understanding, and has been acted upon more than once in modern times. Some notorious swindler takes refuge in a foreign State whither nobody invited him to come, and then there is a demand made for his extradition. The foreign State is quite entitled to say: we know nothing in favour of the man, we have heard and read a great deal in his disfavour, but it would be impossible to commit him for trial in this country; the whole question is beyond our way and our reach, and all that we can do is to remit him for trial to his own country, where, no doubt, the laws of the country will better understand how to deal with him than we could possibly do. Some criminals of the swindler kind have thought they were safe in escaping to a country where no extradition treaty whatever existed between that State and the land of their birth, under the mistaken impression that where there was no extradition treaty there could be no extradition. But they found out their mistake in many well-known instances. In the case of Tynan, however, the question was wholly different. First of all, was his a political offence in the generally accepted meaning of the words? Next, was there evidence enough to justify his committal for trial before a French court of criminal law, supposing his conspiracy had been organised in France? Anyhow, the French authorities refused to hand him over; and the same was the case with those who were said to have been his fellow-conspirators in Holland and in

Belgium. One man was brought for trial to England, a person who was sometimes called Ivory, and sometimes called Bell. He was brought before the magistrate at Bow Street, and evidence was taken, and he was formally committed for trial at a criminal court. But when the trial came on before Mr. Justice Hawkins, the Solicitor-General, who appeared for the prosecution, a man of high ability and legal standing, had to admit and to announce in the end that he had no evidence against the prisoner with which it would be worth while to trouble further the patience of the court. It appeared, in the first place, that the man, whether guilty or not guilty, had not been in Antwerp for a long time before the discovery of the store of bombs; and in the second place, that the one principal witness against him was a man who, for one reason or another, could not be put into the witness-box. So the prosecution failed. Mr. Justice Hawkins ordered the release of the prisoner, advised him to keep better company for the rest of his life, and there was an end of the whole prosecution. Concerning all the vast dynamite scheme to assassinate everybody there was only one accused person put into the dock, and against him the law-officers of the Imperial Government had to acknowledge that they could bring forward no substantial evidence whatever. Under the essential conditions of British law we are bound to assume that this man was not guilty. But he had been kept in prison for several months, and it seems it had not occurred to the acute law-officers of the English crown to enter into any investigation

of the evidence against him. Assuming Mr. Ivory, or Mr. Bell, or whatever his name may be, to be innocent of any dynamite conspiracy—which we are bound to do after the trial in the criminal court—we can only say that it is quite possible, after such a blunder, some man really involved in a genuine dynamite conspiracy may escape unpunished, for the simple reason that a distrust of all stories about dynamite conspiracy is certain to arise in most European countries, and in the American Republic. It is impossible to make loose charges, and to withdraw from them, without finding it difficult for a long time afterwards to get any public belief for serious and genuine accusations.

The Tory Government was placed in a peculiarly embarrassing position. It had lately released three men who had long been imprisoned on the charge of having taken part in a dynamite conspiracy. But it had done so, it is only fair to own, on the medical representations which made it clear that the condition of these men's health was such as to render further imprisonment a sentence to death or to hopeless insanity. Two of the men, in fact, proved to be hopelessly insane. The Conservative Home Secretary probably reasoned out the case humanely and wisely, and said, that if a man is not sentenced to death he ought not to be allowed to remain in prison until the imprisonment kills him; and as there is no judicial sentence known to this country which compels a man to be driven to insanity, a man ought not to be allowed to remain in prison after his frame of mind is

threatening to drive him out of his reason. Their release, indeed, came too late in the case of the two men threatened with insanity; but it was, all the same, a reasonable and a humane act on the part of Sir Matthew White Ridley, the Conservative Home Secretary. He had but lately come into office, and on the medical reports furnished to him he made his decision. Some of his own party, however, were furious against him, and a debate was started in the House of Commons during the discussion on the address by some of his own political colleagues.

The doctrine laid down by certain Conservatives was that the Home Secretary has no right to turn loose upon society either dynamiters or madmen. It does not take much trouble to see the futility of such an assertion. A man is sentenced to imprisonment for a certain number of years. He is not sentenced to death. If he were sentenced to death, he ought to be put to death at once. It is a recognised part of our prison system, that if a man behaves himself well during his years of imprisonment he is to be released before the full expiration of his sentence. One of the men accused of the dynamite conspiracy was, according to the medical reports, likely to die if the full number of his prison years were enforced; and in the ordinary course of affairs the full number of years would not be enforced. It is hard to understand how any reasonable human being, not utterly controlled by party or partisan considerations, could say that Sir Matthew White Ridley was not justified in acting on the medical reports in that case. As

regards the other cases, the British prisons are certainly not fitted for lunatic asylums, nor is it desirable to convert prisoners who have nearly served their appointed time, and who in the ordinary course of things would be soon released, into the fitting inhabitants of a lunatic asylum.

The debate on the release of the dynamiter prisoners in the House of Commons brought up once again, and directly, for public consideration two questions, at least, which had for a long time been discussed in the newspapers and on the platform, and by the public generally. The first question was, whether there ought to be a different system of treatment with regard to political offenders, and what we may call private offenders. The second question was, whether the whole system of prison discipline in these countries did not require some modification and some improvement. Now, with regard to the first question, as to whether political offenders ought to be treated on different conditions from private offenders, it seems to us that there can be no reasonable difference of opinion whatever, if men will but calmly think the subject over. Some of the greatest and noblest of Englishmen were put to death as political offenders. Some of the greatest and noblest of Englishmen were tortured before death as political offenders. Some of the Englishmen whose names are most revered and are most enshrined in the affection of England were tortured and put to death as political offenders. In modern times, it is quite certain that men otherwise of the

most stainless character have passed years of suffering because they strove for some political purpose which they sincerely believed to be genuine, honest, and beneficent.

In the debate on the address to which we have been referring an immense impression was undoubtedly created in all parts of the House of Commons by the speech of Mr. Michael Davitt. Mr. Michael Davitt was a man absolutely blameless in private character. As a London newspaper not committed to Irish ideas said of him, he was a man in whom the whole Irish race at home and abroad felt a just pride. He was in his youth concerned in the Fenian movement, and he was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. In the House of Commons he mentioned the fact that while he was in Portland Prison it had been part of his work to be harnessed daily to a cart, as if he were a mule or a horse, and to drag stones this way and that for hour after hour, and that he had to sleep in a cell which only barely allowed him room to lie down. His words told on the House of Commons, which, to do it justice, is one of the fairest political assemblies in the world, and in which no member of any party felt anything but respect for Mr. Davitt. The question then naturally arose, whether a man like Mr. Davitt ought to have been treated in that fashion; and, of course, with that doubt came the inquiry whether political offenders ought not to be treated on a different principle from the ordinary criminal offenders. No matter whether a man is

right or wrong in his opinions, and in his way of carrying them into action, is there to be no difference made between the man who moves only on some personal and selfish purpose and passion, and the man who is moving only for a cause or a principle out of which he can obtain, and out of which he wants to obtain, no personal gain whatever? Is Lord William Russell, is Theobald Wolfe Tone, exactly on a level with Bill Sykes and Jack the Ripper, whoever that mysterious person may have been? An American once said to the writer of these volumes: 'I know nothing whatever of your Irish controversies with English Governments, except the fact that the English Governments put heavy sentences on Michael Davitt and John Boyle O'Reilly, two of the noblest creatures I have ever met; and that settles for me the whole question of your English Government system in its dealings with Ireland.' Of course we must all admit—every man in his senses is compelled to admit—that the Government of any country is bound to defend its own existence. It cannot allow the most virtuous man or the most patriotic man to endeavour to overthrow it without taking strong measures to sustain it against overthrow. Therefore, as it seems to us, there is no reason that even an Irishman should complain against the fact that an English Government, after sentence in a court of law, consigned, let us say, Mr. Michael Davitt to imprisonment. But then, was it really necessary that he should have been condemned to be yoked to a cart which dragged stones at Portland,

and to sleep in a cell in which he hardly had room to lie down? Was he really to be confounded with the ordinary class of miscreants who murder their wives, and who use brutal violence to old men in order to rob them of their money? Can anybody on earth say that the greatness and the integrity of the empire are to be secured by means which confound a man like Theobald Wolfe Tone, or a man like John Mitchel, or a man like Michael Davitt, with Bill Sykes and Jack the Ripper? In the same House of Commons, when the debate on the address was going on, sat with Mr. Davitt Mr. James F. X. O'Brien, who in his youth had also been concerned in a Fenian insurrection, and who had been sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered. He had, in fact, the proud distinction of being the last man on whom such a sentence had been passed. The sentence, which of course was impossible to be carried out in our days, was commuted to penal servitude for life; and that sentence, too, was commuted, on the ground that during an attack on a police barrack he had determinedly protected the lives of the few poor policemen who had to give in. Calumny itself could never say a word against his character, and he was allowed by amnesty to return to his own country, and he became a member of the House of Commons, and a member of whom the bitterest Conservative would not say a single word that was not a word of respect. The debate, therefore, on the address in the opening of the session of 1897 brought this question into a concentrated form: Is it right to

class men of this character, and this purpose, and this kind, with Bill Sykes and Jack the Ripper? It has to be remembered that America—that is to say, the conquering Northern States, after their great civil war, put no one to death, or even prolonged the period of imprisonment, except for two or three who were actually convicted of assassination. The great leader of the Southern civil war was allowed, after a very short period of imprisonment, to go his way unharmed. Mr. Swinburne, the English poet, published at the time when the Manchester prisoners were under trial—the story is told already in these volumes—a poem in which he said:

> Lo! How fair from afar, taintless of tyranny, stands,
> Thy mighty daughter for years who trod the winepress of war—
> Shines with immaculate hands,
> Slays not a foe, neither fears,
> Stains not peace with a scar;

and he added, speaking of vindictive punishments:

> Neither is any land great whom in its fear-stricken mood
> These things only can save.

Lord John Russell had pointed out in the House of Commons a great many years before, that no death and no torture inflicted on any political patriot or any political fanatic ever prevented some other man of the same mood and of the same purpose from following just the same course. No doubt it is a difficult question to settle—that question as to the manner of dealing with political offenders. But to us, at least, it seems clear that there is nothing

reasonable to be said for the hashing up in one system of Michael Davitt and Bill Sykes.

The criminal laws of England stand in immense need of emendation. They press with terrible force on one class of offences, and they deal very lightly with another class. The rights of property are maintained even still with a ferocious vigour, and a poor man or a woman stealing a loaf of bread is punished with what might be called in proportion an extraordinary severity. On the other hand, we read every day in the papers of a drunken scoundrel who has kicked his wife almost to death getting off with something like six months' imprisonment. The whole general system needs a Parliamentary review; but, unfortunately, Parliament is busied mostly with foreign affairs, and gives itself little time to look into the concerns of the inhabitants of these islands. When we get time enough—if we ever do—to think of domestic affairs, we may come to form and act upon some definite opinion as to the scale of punishment for offences against property and offences against life, and likewise to arrange for some difference being made between the treatment of a high-minded and virtuous man who starts a rebellious movement against the existing authorities, and a man who amuses himself after the fashion of Jack the Ripper. The second question which came up concerned the general dealings of the authorities in the English prisons. To that we have already made some reference. The English prison system is beyond all question—and we are not now speaking of the

relative guilt of the offenders—much more severe than that of the United States. In the American Republic there is every chance given to the convicted criminal to reform and become a better man. An English visitor to one of the State prisons in the American Republic is sometimes amazed at the sort of advantages placed within the reach of the convict.

In some of the State prisons in America there is, no doubt, a stern severity in dealing with serious breaches of discipline or with attempts at escape or mutiny. In many of these prisons measures of punishment for such offences are allowed which would not be endured by public opinion in England. But, on the other hand, the ordinary life of a prisoner is in most of these States made much more endurable than the ordinary life of a prisoner in England. The idea in the United States is to give the imprisoned man or woman a fair chance of becoming reformed, and returning to society a better citizen. Of course it may be said, and it is said here every day, that we must not make prison life an agreeable experience for criminal offenders, and that if a man ought to be punished, he ought to be punished, and there an end. That argument, of course, however it may be expressed, is an argument pure and simple for the principle of torture. The man has done wrong; he ought to be sent to prison; he is sent to prison; his life ought to be made miserable for him in prison, in order that when he comes out of prison he may take care not to get into prison again. As a matter of fact, it is quite certain that in no country in the

world is there created a regular gaol-bird class as much as in Great Britain. Men and women pass their whole lives in getting into prison and getting out of it. Some of the restrictions imposed in the Irish prisons were positively grotesque, and especially grotesque when they applied to political offenders. A short-sighted man was not allowed to wear spectacles; a man with a severe cold in his head was not allowed the use of a pocket-handkerchief, lest perchance he should make use of it as a rope and hang himself; and this in the case of men whose lives, as soon as they came out of prison, would be comfortable, happy, and even honoured. But to return to the mere question of the common criminal, it is greatly to be doubted whether the severity of our prison system in these countries tends in the least to make him a better man. Of course, we cannot carry on social arrangements on the generous principle of the bishop in Victor Hugo's 'Les Misérables,' who, when Jean Valjean was found carrying off a silver candlestick, presented him with another, and bade him to go, and steal no more.

That is a little too sentimental a kind of doctrine for the discipline of an English criminal class; and yet, perhaps, if one were to think over it, it might be found that there was something in it not wholly unworthy of at least a moment's consideration. At any rate, the general prison discipline in Great Britain and Ireland has undoubtedly become a matter for the most careful study. We seem to have now altogether let drop the notion of any reform in the

criminal. Our idea apparently is, Keep him in solitude, make every hour and moment of his life disagreeable; stint him as regards food; feed him with monotony of food; prevent him from having a thorough sleep on any night of his wretched imprisonment; and then, when his term is served, send him out upon the world again. A good many years ago a member of the House of Commons drew attention to the question of transportation to Norfolk Island, and quoted from the evidence in the report of a Royal Commission as to the system of transportation to that island. Norfolk Island was what might be called a penal settlement of the Australian penal settlements. A convict who was too bad for any other Australian penal settlement was relegated to Norfolk Island. The evidence of one convict thus relegated was that the heart of a man went out of him, and the heart of a beast came in. Something of the same kind might be said of the prison discipline system in Great Britain and Ireland. It does seem to ordinary observation as if it were likely, although certainly not so intended, to expel the heart of a man and bring in the heart of a beast. Then, again, our laws, of course, seem to have a much deeper interest in preventing attacks on property than in preventing attacks on life.

'Proputty, proputty, proputty!' as Tennyson's farmer says, seems the one thing to the preservation of which the whole strength of British law ought to be directed. Therefore, even still, some miserable creature who steals out of poverty an article of

goods from a shop is likely to be punished more heavily than the coster who, according to Mr. Gilbert's poem, gets 'tired of jumping on his mother.' The whole question is growing largely in the public mind. Roughly speaking, it might be said that the point of the entire controversy is, whether we shall punish offenders with or without any reference to their possible return to social life, and whether offences against property are really more serious than offences against humanity.

No doubt one might go on for ever writing on either side of these questions, and in these countries we do not move very rapidly with any purpose of social and legal reform. Not a great many years have passed since a starving widow was hanged for stealing a loaf of bread. But the whole subject has been raised again, with interest and with effect, during the last two or three years, and it would be a curious result if the imprisonment and the prison treatment of men like Mr. Michael Davitt should be the indirect occasion for the improvement of the whole system of prison treatment in Great Britain and Ireland.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DONGOLA CAMPAIGN.

PARLIAMENT had opened on January 19, 1897. Before the opening of the House of Lords a meeting of the Liberal peers had been held—a meeting which, it need hardly be said, was not a very crowded gathering—at which Lord Kimberley was unanimously elected to the leadership of the Liberal peers in the hereditary chamber as successor to Lord Rosebery, who had suddenly, and for no reason that quite satisfied the public mind, resigned the position in October 1896. Lord Kimberley had held the position before, and had done his work with steadfastness, ability, good-temper, and success—so far as there could be any success for a party placed in such a pitiful minority. The Queen's Speech was not a very lengthy document, but it was emphatic on many subjects. 'The appalling massacres,' it said, 'which have taken place in Constantinople and in other parts of the Ottoman dominions have called for the special attention of the Powers who were signatories to the Treaty of Paris. Papers will be laid before you showing the considerations which have induced the Powers to make the present condition of the Ottoman Empire the subject of special

consultation by their representatives at Constantinople. The conferences which the six Ambassadors have been instructed to hold are still proceeding.' Beyond this assurance, of course, the Speech from the Throne could not be expected to go. The conferences were still proceeding, and so, too, were the massacres. The massacres seemed likely to go on for a long time before the conferences had taken any form of practical action. Then the speech went on to deal with recent movements in Egypt. 'The action,' it declared, 'undertaken by his Highness the Khedive of Egypt against the Khalifa, with my approval and assistance, has so far been entirely successful. His forces, supported by my officers and troops, have won back the fertile province of Dongola to civilisation by operations conducted with remarkable skill, and the way has been opened for a further advance whenever such a step shall be judged to be desirable.' Of course it was inevitable that such a statement would be made in a Speech from the Throne. Nobody, at least of the outer public, quite knew why the re-conquest of Dongola had been undertaken, but everybody assumed that it was to be followed by a further conquest of territory. In Walter Scott's ballad of 'Bonnie Dundee,' when Claverhouse is asked where he is going, he replies, 'I go whither guides me the ghost of Montrose.' The policy of the English Government evidently was to go in Africa whither guided the ghost of General Gordon.

England is, as we all know, a great constitutional

country, governed under a strict constitutional system—which nobody can deny. All the same, it would be hardly possible for the most despotic Government on the European continent to conduct its foreign policy with more absolute lack of appeal to the opinions of the public than is the way of English administration. Not merely is the ordinary citizen left without any knowledge of what this or that Government is going to do in matters of foreign policy, but the unofficial member of the House of Commons is left in just the same condition of ignorance. The unofficial member of the House of Commons has, of course, the right to 'rise in his place,' as the phrase goes, and to put a question to the Government as to their policy, let us say, in Egypt. He usually gets a very evasive answer. He is told that it is not just the time when it would be quite for the public interest if Her Majesty's Government were to make any explicit statement. He is quietly snubbed, in fact, and if he is at all a sensitive person, he sits down, with the depressing conviction that he has made rather a fool of himself. It is now perfectly certain, that if the English public had been taken fully into counsel on some of the great and critical questions of modern foreign policy, England would have been saved from many a mistake of disastrous consequence. If the country had been consulted fully about the policy of the Crimean War, that war, which nobody now thinks of justifying, would never have been undertaken. The Queen is a thoroughly constitutional sovereign, and

has never failed to act upon the advice of her ministers; but we all know now that both she and her husband had the most serious doubts and misgivings as to the policy of that unhappy war. We also know that both she and her husband had very serious doubts as to the language spoken and the policy suggested by some of her ministers at the outbreak of the great civil strife in America. Of course it will be said that no Administration could consent to take the whole public of Great Britain and Ireland into consultation about foreign policy. Let that be granted, if it must be; but then, let us frankly admit that, as regards foreign affairs, at all events, England is not governed on a constitutional system.

We are led to these thoughts chiefly by the fact that in recent years the policy of the Imperial Government in Egypt, and on the Indian frontier as well, exhibited several new and unexpected developments, about the meaning of which the public of these islands knew no more than Balaam's donkey. The people of these countries are in general rather naturally inclined not to trouble their heads about difficult foreign questions. When one has to go looking for places on a map in order to understand the bearing of some movement, he is inclined to avoid the trouble by putting the whole subject away, and letting his betters do even as they will. This has, indeed, been the course taken by the English public for many years with regard to Egypt. At one time there was a sort of vague general idea that if we did not take possession of Egypt, France would come

in and take it, or Russia would come in and take it, and we should be cut off from our high-road to India. With that idea in their minds the people of these countries were content to let Administrations do just whatever they liked. A Khedive of Egypt was set up or a Khedive was put down. Alexandria was bombarded. Arabi Pasha was sent into exile, and the public of Great Britain took no account; in the words of Walter Scott's Lowlander, it was 'a' ane to Dandie.' This was true of the ordinary members of the House of Commons, as well as of the man in the streets or the man on the top of the omnibus. Great tragic events, such as the death of General Gordon, did, indeed, arouse the public feeling and make an impression all over these islands. But the impression was wholly personal—a feeling of admiration and sympathy for a good and great man who had perished in the discharge of what had been put upon him as a national duty. It aroused no general inquiry into the course of policy which had sent Gordon to his doom. In the early sittings of the House of Commons in 1897 the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, made a new announcement as to the Imperial policy in Egypt. We have already spoken of the advance that was made along the Nile southward to Dongola, and the skill and the success of the expedition. We have also told of the fact that the Mixed Tribunals refused to allow the cost of the Dongola expedition to be imposed upon the population of Egypt. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told the House of Commons that a further

movement had been determined on and suggested, though he did not make it quite clear that the occupation of the Soudan was to be carried as far as Khartoum, the place where General Gordon met his death. 'We are not going to be worried out of Egypt,' said the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and although much fault was found with his words by leading members of the Opposition, it does not seem at all likely that a great State like England, having occupied Egypt with what she believed to be definite duties and responsibilities, would allow herself to be worried out of the position by the grumblings of foreign Governments. What seemed to us peculiar in the whole matter—in the announcement of fresh and further annexation, of increased expense to the public of these countries, and of increased responsibility to the Government of the Sovereign—was the fact that the vast majority of the English public knew no more about the rights and wrongs of the whole question than the vast majority of the people of China knew about the rights and wrongs of the quarrel with Japan. It seems to us that there must be certain danger in this almost absolute ignorance of the whole people concerning the foreign policy of their rulers.

To the writer of this book it appears that if the intelligence of the English public could have been consulted or got at, Alexandria would never have been bombarded, and Arabi Pasha would never have been conquered and sent into exile. But, of course, the English public in general knew nothing at all about the matter, and were only told, not asked,

what was to be done, and in some instances only knew when the things had been done. It was the same with the 'forward policy' as it is called on the Indian frontier, which began with the occupation, though not, as the English public then understood, with the retention of Chitral, and which led to a new and a most serious war with the frontier tribes. The British public accepted the occupation of Chitral but knew nothing whatever of the consequences to which the retention of Chitral was likely to lead. Of course, it would be hard to expect that the ordinary British householder should take the trouble to make himself acquainted with our policy in foreign countries. He has a good many other things to look after which come very much closer to his daily business and his daily life; and he could not easily get to know much about the foreign questions, anyhow, for the leaders of a Government are not inclined to give him, or even his representatives in Parliament, any particular information. The only moral which we feel inclined to draw from the whole condition of things is that, as regards foreign policy, England is not much more of a constitutional country than most of her continental neighbours, except for the fact that in some other States, as in Russia, for example, or in Germany, the sovereign manages matters out of his own head, as the children say, and that in this country the Administration conducts the business. A crash or a calamity in foreign policy comes upon us in this country with the shock of an absolute surprise. We never knew what was going to happen.

Let us return, however, to the Speech from the Throne at the opening of the session of 1897. The Queen mentioned that the Government had discussed with the United States, 'acting as the friend of Venezuela, the terms under which the pending questions of disputed frontier between that republic and my colony of British Guiana may be equitably submitted to arbitration.' Then came a much more important announcement. 'It is with much gratification,' the Speech declared, 'that I have concluded a Treaty for a general arbitration with the President of the United States, by which I trust that all differences that may arise between us will be peacefully adjusted. I hope that this arrangement may have a further value in commending to other Powers the consideration of a principle by which the danger of war may be notably abated.' Too much importance could not possibly be attached to the closing words of the paragraph; although, perhaps, the English of the paragraph is not all that might be desired, or that the Queen herself would be likely to write with her own hand. It is much to be regretted that royal speeches are so seldom written in good Anglo-Saxon language. 'Notably abated' is a vile phrase. It is certain, however, that no event of the Queen's long reign could be more happy or more auspicious than even the mere preliminary arrangement between England and the United States; and, undoubtedly, one of the great benefits of such a treaty would be that it might, and indeed must, commend to other nations the consideration of a principle by which the

danger of war might be made, indeed, the last resource, the very last resource, of an international controversy. There was nothing in the speech about Ireland, except the announcement that Parliament was to be asked to consider a bill for the establishment of a Board of Agriculture in that country.

This was all the more surprising because of the general interest which had been created by the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the subject of the relative taxation of England and Ireland. The Commission was appointed in the first instance on the urgent appeal of Mr. Sexton, then a member of the House of Commons, and one of the most brilliant speakers of the Irish Nationalist party, or, indeed, of any party in the House. Mr. Sexton had an especial gift for finance and financial calculation, and he had long been convinced that Ireland was taxed beyond her reasonable share of liability as compared with England. The Commission was very strong, and was composed almost altogether of what might be called experts. Its first chairman was Mr. Childers, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer, and had filled several high offices in administration, and he continued to be chairman up to the time of his death. Lord Welby, who had long been Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, and who was one of the greatest financial authorities in the country, was a prominent member of the Commission. So was Lord Farrer, once Permanent Secretary to the Board of Trade; so was Mr. Sexton, and so was Mr. Blake, who had been the leader of the Liberal

party in the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada for many years, and who had held a high position at the bar, and had pleaded many times, with great success, in Canadian causes before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. There was not, in fact, a single member of the Commission who could not be regarded as an authority on questions of finance. The Commission summoned as witnesses all manner of men whose evidence could carry weight and influence. Among numbers of others was Sir Robert Giffen, of the Board of Trade, then and now very commonly recognised as the greatest financial authority in England. The Commission sat for a long time, and during the course of its sittings Mr. Childers died. His place as chairman was taken by the O'Conor Don, who had sat in the House of Commons for many years as an Irish member, and had given up the greatest part of his life to the study of questions of finance. The Commission, as is usual in such cases, presented a number of reports. No Royal Commission is ever absolutely unanimous in its report. It would be utterly impossible to get together a number of men, gathered from all sections of public life, who could be unanimous in their opinion upon any subject whatever. But, passing over questions of detail, with which it is not necessary in the least to trouble the reader, we may say that the Commission was as nearly as possible unanimous in the opinion that Ireland had been taxed far beyond her due proportion. Her condition of poverty rendered her only liable to pay a rate of

one-twentieth of English taxation, and she was actually taxed to the amount of rather more than one-twelfth. Therefore, the net result of the inquiry was that for a great many years Ireland had paid annually more than two millions beyond her just proportion of taxation. The effect of this announcement, which was, as has been said, almost unanimous, was to arouse an immense amount of emotion in Ireland, and to bring together a union of Irishmen such as had never before been seen in our days. The Irish peers and landlords stood for the first time side by side with Irish Nationalist members on the same platform and for the same purpose. An Irish peer presided over a meeting at which a Nationalist imprisoned for many years on a charge of treason-felony was one of the prominent speakers. For the first time in the whole history of Irish agitation it seemed likely that all ranks and classes of Irishmen were about to adopt a common policy. Everybody went about quoting Dr. Johnson's advice to an Irishman, never to consent to the principle of an Act of Union between the two countries, 'because if you do we shall certainly rob you.' Everybody also who was on the Irish side of the question revived Lord Byron's declaration, that the union of England with Ireland is 'the union of the shark with his prey.' The important question was, how to deal with the difficulty. What was to be done? Was the money to be given back, or was there to be some immediate remission in Irish taxation? Mr. Arthur Balfour came to the front in an ingenious and amusing

speech which showed an utter incapacity to understand the whole subject. The overwrought contribution of Ireland, he contended, was involved entirely, or almost entirely, in indirect taxation. The duty on whisky was very high. The duty on tobacco was very high. But he argued that an Irishman has the easiest and readiest escape from such unfair taxation by not smoking tobacco and not drinking whisky. On that same principle, as it was promptly pointed out, an Englishman has the readiest way of avoiding taxation of any kind. He is not bound to drink wine or spirits. He can do without them of his own free will. He is not bound to smoke tobacco; and if he chooses he is not bound to earn an income which will bring him within the range of the income tax. If he only makes up his mind, he can give away the great bulk of his property, supposing that he has any, to some public charity, and then he can live on one hundred a year, and drink no wine, and smoke no cigars, and pay no income tax whatever. Mr. Balfour had hardly considered this subject when he uttered opinions like these. It is not quite enough to say that an Irishman who never drank wine, and never smoked cigars, and never indulged in luxuries of any kind, is exactly on the taxation level with an Englishman who likes his whisky-and-soda and his cigar, and who enjoys a comfortable house to live in. Mr. Balfour's theory would really have brought us down to the times 'when wild in woods the noble savage ran,' only that the theory was applied strictly to the Irishman, and not to the Englishman. What

does the Irishman want with tobacco, or wine, or spirits? it might perhaps fairly be asked. But then comes the other question, 'What does the Englishman want with wine, or spirits, or cigars?' It is quite clear that Mr. Balfour's attempt to deal with the report of the Commission did not touch the question in the very least. When it is proved that a country is overtaxed in indirect rating, it is no answer whatever to say that if you do not touch the articles which are indirectly overrated you escape the whole penalty. Men want to smoke. Men want to drink. It would be better, no doubt, if they had not such wants. But while life goes on as it is the great mass of humanity will have these desires, and the question raised by the Royal Commission was whether Ireland was or was not unfairly dealt with in the application of her taxation. The conclusion of the Commission on the whole was very distinct. The almost unanimous decision was that Ireland had been hardly dealt with.

The argument for the Home Rule question became strengthened immensely by the result of the Commission. To the ordinary impartial mind it was made as clear as light that Ireland under a local government could never have been subjected to such excessive taxation. Not too much importance, perhaps, must be attached to the union of the landlords and the tenants on this question of overtaxation. Still, it is a fact to be taken into account that for once in our time the peers and the peasants, the landlords and the tenants, the Orangemen and

the Nationalists, came together on a common platform.

There was a famine in India, and of course attention was directed to that fact in the Royal Speech, and to the necessity of an administrative and a national effort to relieve it; and there was something said about the provisions which, in the judgment of the military authorities, were required for adding to the defences of the Empire. The debate on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne is, of course, always of a more or less perfunctory character. It is, in its earlier stages, at all events, a mere ceremonial. The mover and seconder of the address are always complimented on their speeches by the leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Government in either House of Parliament. In the House of Commons on this particular occasion the usual compliments were paid, but neither the leader of the Opposition nor the leader of the House took the opportunity of congratulating the seconder of the address on the fact that he had contrived to introduce into his speech the largest number of stale quotations which had been heard in that House for ever so many years. The House as a rule is affectionate to old quotations. It enjoys them as, George Eliot says, most people enjoy old familiar airs. For that reason, amongst others, the speech of the seconder of the address was distinctly happy. There was not one of his quotations which must not have reached the mind of the most illiterate member of the House of

Commons. As far as regards the first night's debate there was a certain half-heartedness made perceptible in the performance.

In considering the debate on the address the question naturally arises whether there ought to be any debate on the address at all. The reply to the address is, as we have just said, a mere matter of ceremonial. A man gets up in a costume not worn in ordinary life, and proposes the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, and another man gets up after him in a costume also not worn in the common business of existence, and seconds the motion. Then the debate is opened, and it may go on for days and for weeks. It is certain to go on for days, and it may possibly go on for weeks. There is really no Parliamentary rule which could legitimately restrict the debate, and it might in a possible case, unless the Speaker should intervene, go on until the opening of the financial year. The debate on the address has really no influence whatever on the policy of the session. What the Government in power proposes to do it will do, without the slightest regard for the opinions expressed in the debate on the address. If it has got a strong majority, it will be of no consequence whatever to it how many members of the Opposition may have expressed in the debate on the address objection to its policy. There it is, enthroned in power, and that is all that for the moment concerns it. No Government is likely to be turned out of power by an ordinary and commonplace debate on the

address. The event has occurred, but only when the Government came into office without power, and when it was perfectly certain that a vote of want of confidence must upset it, and lift its opponents into office. But in the case of a Government with a good majority at its back it is quite certain that the debate on the address is practically a waste of time and space and words. Nobody is converted by it. Nobody gets any other ideas from it than those which are already in his mind, and it remains in the end merely a question of vapid voting. The result of the division is known to everybody long before the division takes place, and there seems, therefore, no reason whatever why the House of Commons should occupy several days at the opening of each session by a long and various discussion over all questions of home and foreign politics which cannot possibly lead to any manner of practical result. The truth is that the House of Commons is not by any means a good assembly for the working of public business. It is fettered by old fashions, it is hampered by regulations which have nothing whatever to do with our present life or our way of carrying on public business. There is not a county council or a board of guardians in the Empire which could manage its work on the principle, or the absence of principle, accepted by the House of Commons. As to the House of Lords we have, of course, little or nothing to say. The peers have only the power of putting further impediment in the way of the House of Commons doing any business

whatever. When the House of Commons has, after great pains and trouble, succeeded, in spite of all the difficulties in its way, in getting some measure passed through a third reading, then the House of Lords, which could not carry anything of its own motion, is enabled to come in and destroy the measure. Therefore the House of Commons, which is elected on the principle of popular representation, is always liable to have its own measures reduced to nothing by the non-representative House of Lords. But there is more than that. The House of Commons itself is time-hampered by some of its own ridiculous usages, of which, we venture to think, the long debate on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne is a remarkable illustration. There is not a single question brought up in the debate on the address in reply to the Queen's Speech which would not have to come up in the ordinary course of things at some right and appropriate moment. Macaulay, of course, has said that Parliamentary government is government by talking. Unquestionably that is a fact. Parliamentary government in a kingdom like England and Ireland, and Scotland and Wales, is government by talking. It is nothing else, it can be nothing else. The beneficent despot theory we have no longer with us. If John Stuart Mill had not killed it, it would have been killed of itself long ago. But Macaulay's theory does not make it quite clear that Parliamentary government must be government by sempiternal talk. We have yet to meet the man who can sanely reason out the case that a

great many days of debate on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne are of any assistance whatever to the disposal of the session's business. If the House of Commons were 'a little Academe,' to use Shakespeare's phrase, then it might, indeed, be well to talk round and round a subject in the usual academic way, without any immediate reference to any instant question which had to be brought to an early practical test. But the debate on the address in 1897 had the effect of showing in a very illustrative light how poor the progress was that could be made by such a discussion. One of the great questions which had to be postponed, and not unreasonably postponed, was the question to which we have already referred, of the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland. Now, the ordinary human being would think that, if anything wanted to be considered at once and during the debate on the address, it was just that question: Had Ireland been overtaxed for two millions and a half a year during a great number of years, or had she not? But it was felt, and with the full concurrence of the Irish members, that the debate on the address was not a convenient time for discussing so great a question. The Government undertook to fix a definite date for discussing the subject, and also promised some further inquiry, and the Irish Nationalist members willingly accepted the promise for the date, but opposed the threatened further inquiry. But we have only to point out that this fact in itself is another illustration of the futility of the formal debate on the address.

It was made clear in that debate that no subject of really great importance could possibly be discussed and settled in the course of that ceremonial conversation. Now, when Parliaments are very busy with actual work, we think it will be admitted that the less they have of mere ceremonial debate, the better. The discussion on the address in reply to the Royal Speech has now become a meaningless and a senseless performance. Every question talked over in the course of that long and generally wearisome debate will have to come up again, if it is worth coming up again, for practical settlement, or at all events for practical discussion. The days that are spent on the debate upon the address are absolutely wasted days. The greatest orator cannot possibly illumine them, and they are known by everybody to be simply so many days taken away from the practical business of the House. Some time or other a change will no doubt be made. The Speech from the Throne is essential as our usages go. It is an announcement of policy past and present. But every single announcement it makes will have to be taken into consideration afterwards in the form of debate and in the form of legislation. The wit of man would fail to show any reason for discussing its propositions in advance, and in the form of academic oratory, which can accomplish nothing except waste of time.

CHAPTER XXII.

'THE CITY OF BLOOD.'

About the middle of January 1897, England was startled by the news that an expedition of English officials in the territory of Benin, in northern or almost in Equatorial Africa, had ended in the capture or the massacre of nearly all the members of the force, British and native. Later news were a little, just a little, more satisfactory. Some two or three Englishmen and a very few natives had escaped. But the bulk of the force was undoubtedly captured or massacred, and capture and massacre would in that case certainly be synonymous terms. The King of Benin is one of the savage sovereigns who might have been the horror of a boy's story-book. He, who is a fetish-worshipper, still keeps up the practice of human sacrifice, and his capital town, Benin, is commonly known as the 'city of blood.' The territory of Benin is near the Gold Coast and Dahomey, and is washed by that stretch of the sea which is called the Bight of Benin. 'Bight' is a word taken from the Anglo-Saxon which signifies a bend, or round, of any kind which is soft, spreading, and gradual—signifies amongst other things a woman's

breast—and is not geographically or otherwise any sharp or sudden indentation. The English occupation of the Niger Coast Protectorate brought on some hope of dealing on fair terms of trade with the murderous savage who is called the sovereign of Benin. Apparently it was thought a reasonable thing to send a sort of peaceful deputation to wait upon the King of Benin, and to request for permission to pass freely through his territory for the purposes of peaceful trade. The expedition was not armed except in the sense that one or two of its members carried the revolver, which is habitually borne by all foreign travellers within an uncivilised country.

The expedition, in fact, disappeared but for Captain Boisragon and Mr. Locke, who managed somehow to escape. For the rest, with the exception of some natives, and very few even of these, the jaws of darkness did devour it up. These two men were wounded and had six days of wandering in the pestilential marshes of that terrible country. But they managed to pull through somehow with safety of their lives. Mr. Phillips, the head of the party, Major Crawford, Captain Maling, Mr. Campbell, Dr. Elliot, Mr. Powis, and Mr. Gordon were blotted out of existence. It unfortunately happened that Mr. Moor, the Consul-General of the Niger Coast Protectorate, was in England when the expedition was made and when the destruction of its members took place. No blame whatever could be attached to Mr. Moor. Despite of some modern medical theories which insist that a well-nurtured Englishman can

stand any tropical and pestilential climate better than a native can, there is still found a great deal of force in the old-fashioned idea that an Englishman stationed in some poisonous region of Africa must have an occasional visit to a happier climate if he wishes to live at all. Mr. Moor came home for rest and change of air; but as a London paper, the *Daily News*, observed, 'one of the strange circumstances surrounding this unlucky enterprise, and one which will have to be fully explained, is why the march was made in the Consul-General's absence from the coast on leave.' Then, again, the question full of mystery which astonished people in England was why the expedition should have been strong in numbers and absolutely defenceless or almost defenceless in arms. If it was meant merely to impress the sovereign of Benin with the idea that some friendly Englishmen were coming to consult with him on a purely peaceful mission, the fewer the number of the party the better. Two or three men must of course have taken their lives in their hands, as Englishmen have done at all times and in all places, and they might thus have impressed the King of Benin with the idea that they meant him no harm. Two or three men unarmed could not have captured even the mud-built capital of Benin. On the other hand there might have been reason why the sovereign of Benin should be compelled to leave his territory open to peaceful trade and to desist from his loathsome human sacrifices. But in such a case the expedition ought to have been strong enough and well

enough armed to take care of itself. 'In that case,' says the *Daily News*, 'we should expect to find that a body of armed men supported by a gunboat or a cruiser had been despatched from Old Calabar.' 'The most mysterious part,' adds the same paper, 'of the whole story is that, whereas the number of Mr. Phillips's band was large enough to excite the suspicions and arouse the hostility of the natives, they were not prepared to resist anything like an organised attack.' It appears that on former occasions several British officers were allowed to enter the city of Benin without any difficulty or danger. 'Nine or ten official whites,' says the *Daily News*, 'and two or three hundred native followers provoked assault without inspiring alarm.'

During the early days when the news came the whole expedition was a question of mystery. Why was it started at all? and why, if started at all, was it started in that way? everybody kept asking. Of course the one general opinion, apart from all inquiries and all answers to inquiries, was that the wrong done must be avenged and that the sovereign of Benin and his dominion must be blotted out of baneful existence. Now the writer of this book has never been very cordially in favour of civilising missions, with civilised arms in the hands of civilisation. The spread of British empire in tropical Africa seems rather dearly bought by so much sacrifice of British life. After all it is wholly impossible that England or any other civilised country could civilise by force the whole human race. We must

loathe the sacrifices of men and women in the dominion of the King of Benin, but there are sad things happening every day in China, and there is cannibalism still in some parts of Africa and in certain of the South Sea Islands, and infant life is terribly unsafe in various regions where the infants seem to be in the way, and indeed one's mind is never quite easy about all that is going on in the rowdy quarters of London and of Paris and of New York. It would hardly do for England, as Sydney Smith says, to undertake to be the armed champion of the Decalogue all over the world. Still, as human affairs and human feelings go, it would be quite impossible to expect that a country like England should allow the massacre of the men who had made the expedition to Benin pass off without another expedition fully armed and determined on retaliation. If the sovereign of Benin and his rulership and his territory should come to be practically blotted out, the estate of the world would certainly be none the less happy for the event. An expedition was at once arranged for, to go out to Equatorial Africa without any profession whatever of peaceful purpose, and to teach the master of Benin that he had made a great mistake when he let loose his assassin followers on the peaceful visitors to his city of blood. The younger Pitt, in a famous peroration of his, spoke of the possibility of Africa, the latest called to civilisation of the world, becoming the great harbinger of universal light and peace. Pitt's prophecy may yet be realised, but so far we only know that Africa is the

great disturber and the great trouble of civilisation. The so-called civilised States crowd down upon her. They wrangle for every available corner of her space. Even the smallest and poorest European States have in this way, if we might paraphrase the words of Burke, the vices of great empires. Portugal and Belgium must have their African possessions as well as England and France and Germany. Not a year passes but we hear of the chance of some war between European States because of various complications arising out of the difficulty about settling their boundary lines in Africa.

The quiet observer can only satisfy his mind, if he can thus satisfy it, by saying that all this cannot be helped. We have to put up with it, as men have to put up with the London fogs and the New York summer heat, and the pestilential marshes of many tropical countries. The philosophical observers are somewhat happy, who, while not always approving of all the means employed, yet look with complacency towards the end, and believe that after a while the civilised nations of Europe will have covered Africa with a sparkling network of European civilisation. There too, we might fondly believe, the civilisation will be unlike that of Europe, absolutely peaceful, loving, and only rival in the arts of improvement and in forwarding the welfare of humanity. But it will certainly take a long time to come to that stage of human evolution, and in the meanwhile the alighting of all the European States on this part and that part of Africa is likely

to lead to what in diplomatic correspondence would be called grave complications. Africa, after all, whatever her size, can hardly afford ample camping-ground for all the European Powers, especially when we remember that every European Power seems to have set its heart on making its territory and its hintergrund large enough to crowd every other Power into the smallest possible space.

Towards the end of January some full, or all but full, accounts reached London with regard to the disaster. The expedition, it appeared, was divided into two parties, the first being about four hours' march ahead of the second. The first party was suddenly attacked by a strong force of the King's warriors who were lying in ambush front and rear in the forest swamp to await their arrival. The advance party fell victims to a man to the attack made on them, not one of them escaping. The second company not knowing anything of what had happened followed quietly in the track of its vanguard, and suddenly came upon the heaped-up corpses of their friends who had already been massacred by the savage Benin warriors. While the later comers were actually examining this horrible scene of murder they were themselves attacked from the forest, and nearly all of them were shot down. Mr. Phillips, Major Crawford, Captain Maling, Mr. Campbell of the consular service, the trading agents Mr. Powis and Mr. Gordon, and more than two hundred of the native carriers were killed. Commissioner Locke and Captain Boisragon were

wounded, but, as we have already mentioned, were able to escape from the enemy and to hide themselves in the recesses of the swampy, sweltering forest. For five days they trod in that pathless bush, living on plantains and with nothing to drink but the dew from the grass. They were found by a relief party which had been sent down the river in a canoe. It is officially stated that the expedition, after landing at Gato Creek, were received in every town and village which they passed on their way to Benin with friendly greetings from the people and kindly messages from the King himself. On the day after their landing they had marched some fourteen miles—we are speaking now, of course, of the first expedition—when they were suddenly fired upon by an ambuscade, both in the front and in the rear. Mr. Phillips, Dr. Elliot, and Mr. Powis were killed at once; Major Crawford was wounded, but was picked up by Captain Boisragon and Mr. Locke. Their help, however, was of no avail, for he was wounded again as he was actually lifted off the ground by his two companions, and he died almost immediately; but before his death he found a voice to implore his two comrades to leave him behind and to look to their own safety, as he knew that his own case was hopeless. Mr. Campbell was taken prisoner and carried to Benin, where the King refused to allow him to be received, and he was brought to a neighbouring village and killed there. Mr. Locke, who, with Captain Boisragon, escaped into the bush, was armed with a revolver and was able to shoot

down several of the natives who attacked him and his companions during their terrible wanderings. Strange to say, that after all this they came into a Benin village where the natives received them kindly and conveyed them down the creek in a covered canoe. All the Europeans who were killed were instantly beheaded by the natives. The treatment, however, given to Captain Boisragon and Mr. Locke would seem to show that there was no national feeling against the expedition or its purpose. The King, apparently, like the King in 'Hamlet,' was alone to blame—at this stage of the business. According to an account received from Lagos, there had been some difficulties regarding facilities for internal trade, and Acting-Consul-General Phillips had sent a request to the King for a peaceful and friendly interview. The King at first asked for a delay of one month, but immediately after sent a message to say that he would receive Mr. Phillips and his companions in two days. On the faith of this seemingly friendly assurance it was arranged that the expedition should go into movement at once, and after much consideration it was agreed that, in order to make the peaceful nature of the expedition apparent, its English members should go practically unarmed. Native carriers were taken for the purpose of propelling the canoes over the creeks and rivers which indent the whole region, and to carry the luggage of the Englishmen and various gifts to be presented to the King. The first expedition set out from New Benin, at the mouth of the river, and went twenty-five miles by steamer, then

they went in canoes paddled by natives for twenty miles further up the Ologi Creek. Then they had, as has already been mentioned, some fourteen miles to go through a dense forest which makes the approach to the city of Benin a task of terrible difficulty, even under the most favourable circumstances. The native carriers were murdered just as the Europeans were. Guns, spears, clubs, and cutlasses were used in the massacre. The spectacle which the second part of the expedition came upon is said to have been, and must have been, horrible to see. Very few, however, of the members of the second party were allowed much time to look upon it. All but the two we have mentioned were added to the ranks of the murdered, and it would seem from the latest accounts that only one or two of the native carriers escaped. So far as one could then judge, it was an act of deliberate treachery on the part of the sovereign of Benin. One is reluctant to write a single word in criticism of the brave men who started the expedition, but it is sadly to be regretted that such an expedition under such conditions should ever have been started. The character and the doings of the sovereign of Benin must have been pretty well known to Europeans in that region of Africa, and especially to some of the experienced men who organised the expedition and took part in it. But, however one may question their policy, no one can question their courage or their patriotic purpose, and no one could say that they did not deserve well of their country.

The greatest devotee of peace could hardly expect that the English Government would take no steps to avenge the deeds of the King of Benin. It seemed impossible to believe that there was not deliberate treachery on his part; for no company of sane Europeans experienced in the ways of that region of Africa would have ventured on an unarmed movement to the city of Benin without some assurance of peaceful welcome from the sovereign. The bravest men do not go out to die for no purpose whatever, and these men who died so bravely must have set out with some assurance that their peaceful offers were to be met in a peaceful way. Therefore of course it became absolutely essential that the Imperial Government should take the quickest and the sternest measures to punish the King of Benin for a course of treachery and murder which apparently had not all the sympathy of even his own subjects.

The 'punitive expedition,' as it was called, to Benin was of course a complete success. It only wanted time and men to accomplish it. The time came, and the men came, and the city was captured without the slightest difficulty. It was found to be 'full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.' It was made sickening by the corroding corpses of men and women, victims to the loathsome system of human sacrifice. The expedition was recalled. The king himself escaped. His Majesty preferred, on the whole, not to meet the fellow-soldiers of the men whom he had deceived, betrayed, and murdered.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PITMAN—SPENCER WELLS—THE APPEAL OF THE PRINCE OF WALES.

We often hear of a man who has a life-theory which he is enabled to bring to success, and we hear of many men who have life-theories out of which nothing comes for all their efforts and labour. On January 22, 1897, there died a man who had occupied his whole quiet, noble life with two theories, one of which was a complete success, and the other, up to this time, an absolute failure. We are speaking of Sir Isaac Pitman, who died in his eighty-fourth year. Not long before his death he wrote to a friend a beautiful, touching and cheery letter, in which he told that his heart was becoming physically a failure, but that he hoped to start again on a new career in another world. The whole idea was characteristic of the man. All his life long he worked at the realisation of his two theories in the full belief that he was thereby doing some good for the human race. He remained faithful to his purpose through his life. It was a modest purpose seemingly, quite unlike the heroic enterprises of the conquerors and the imperialist spirits whose ambition is to

annex new territory, or of the men who start out to found great speculative enterprises and to make money. By no conceivable chances known to practical human beings could Sir Isaac Pitman have made a great fortune out of either of his theories, one of which was an absolute success and the other an absolute failure. Nor was he even like the men who discover great principles in surgery or in medicine which tend to prolong human life and to mitigate human suffering. For such men their work is its own full and best reward. They find out how to make life better worth living and to reduce the agonies of physical trouble; and to have accomplished anything in that way is a crown to any man of feeling and of genius. But Sir Isaac Pitman's was a very modest sort of work. He did not aim at being a conqueror or a millionaire or a man who could to any serious extent 'lighten the load of the heavily laden.' His two ideas were to invent a new system of shorthand which should surpass all its predecessors in accuracy and in intelligibility, and also to reconstruct the spelling of the English language on what he called the phonetic system.

Sir Isaac Pitman's system of shorthand was a complete success. His principle of phonetic spelling has not advanced one single step since he first tried to set it into movement. He invented his new system of shorthand in the year of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne, and it may be doubted whether many of the glories of that long reign are really better worthy of record than Sir Isaac

Pitman's system of shorthand. Shorthand, of course, has been going on in the world for ages. As soon as men begin to make speeches and want to have their speeches published in some sort of form, shorthand comes in as a matter of necessity. It was undoubtedly known in the classic days of Rome. There is an epigram of Martial's which, if we had not scores of other testimonials, would make the fact certain. Martial's joke describes a shorthand writer who was such a master of his craft that he had finished his notes long before the orator had finished his speech. So far as we can know of modern times, Sir Isaac Pitman's was the first really satisfactory system. How the shorthand writers in Martial's days got down their notes we cannot have any very really clear and accurate idea. But those of us whose memories can go clearly back over fifty years or so will understand the difference between the system introduced into England by Sir Isaac Pitman and the system existing in Great Britain and Ireland before that time. Sir Isaac Pitman's system was slow in growing, and even men who could not possibly be called old are able to remember the days before it came into universal or almost universal use. The earliest systems of shorthand in these countries were simply the omission of all the vowels and the invention of a few arbitrary signs which represented the continuation of a word like 'various,' for example, or like 'incomprehensibilities.' The shorthand writer left out all the vowels and put in only the consonants and these few arbitrary terminations which we have

just mentioned. Of course, if he was a man of any intelligence or invention he devised some few marks and signs for himself which he could bear in mind and which were for him intelligible. But all the same, he wrote under the great difficulty that he could not sometimes translate off hand with accuracy the notes he himself had made. The trouble is that when a reporter is taking a verbatim note of a speech his whole mental faculties are usually absorbed in the merely mechanical performance, and when the speech is over, his mere memory can afford him but little help in his translation. Lord Palmerston once said good-humouredly that he had taken great pains to learn shorthand, and that he had arrived at the success of being able to make a note of every word that any orator spoke, but the serious difficulty was that he could not afterwards read a single line of his shorthand. Of course there were some men more happy than Lord Palmerston, and before Pitman's invention had taken hold of the world of journalists there were great reporters. There was Charles Dickens, for one, who never had the advantage of knowing Pitman's system, and who during his few sessions in the Reporters' Gallery of the House of Commons was recognised as one of the best reporters who ever held a seat in that place. Still the system was very capricious, not always to be trusted, and one great trouble was that no reporter could count on being able to transcribe with accuracy the notes of any other reporter. Isaac Pitman proposed to reform all that system. He started the principle

that shorthand must be written according to sound; that is to say, that the shorthand writer must be instructed to represent the sound and not the spelling of the words. It may seem hard to convey to the mind of the general public the immense difference between these two principles. But it is quite certain that Pitman's system got a complete hold of the reporters of English newspapers and that no rival system has yet come up.

Pitman's other idea was that the English language ought to be spelt as it is sounded. He started a spelling reform according to his principle of phonography or writing by sound. But one can only say that so far that principle has been a total failure. Some of the objections to it are no doubt purely superficial. To the minds of most people it looks ridiculous to spell phonetic, 'fonetic.' To most people, too, it seems intolerable to spell philosophy, 'filosofy.' But ridicule kills in many other countries besides France. So ridicule killed the phonetic system. Some more serious objections were raised by learned and scholarly men. It was asked what becomes of the history of the language if you alter all its spelling and so blot out all guides to the original meaning of the words. It was pointed out that even already, and without the help of the Pitman system, the average Englishman, and perhaps especially the average English journalist, was getting to use words in the most inaccurate way. But then, on the other hand, this objection might be said to cut in both directions. The Italians spell their word

for philosophy with an 'f,' but none of their cultured writers seem to have forgotten for the moment what is the derivation of the word. In this country, even writers who must be supposed to have had some fair education constantly speak of a 'phenomenon' as of something out of the common occurrence of things and quite marvellous. But the word could not be more often misused if it had been spelt 'fenomenon.' However that may be, nothing is more certain than that Sir Isaac Pitman's shorthand reform was a splendid success, and that his spelling reform has been so far a total failure. Nothing, too, can be more certain than that his life was one of noble purpose and perseverance. He had had the rare good fortune to find his path and his place in existence, and to act on his convictions whether they won or lost. He came in for some public recognition and honour towards the close of his really noble life; but those who knew anything of him personally had long recognised the thorough honesty of his ambition to serve mankind in his own way, and the modesty with which he refused to go beyond the tasks which, according to his own judgment, had been set out for him. Perhaps it would be too much to call such a life, half failure, half success, a great achievement in the ordinary and vulgar sense of the words. Pitman had done nothing for which he could possibly expect to be created a Duke, even if we can imagine his having the slightest ambition for such a title. He could not even be made a Poet Laureate, for so far as we know he had never written any poems. But

he had worked to the very utmost the faculties that nature had conferred on him, and he had used them according to his judgment for the benefit of public education, and it is reasonable to hope that his country will not soon forget him.

At the opening of February 1897 the career of a great English surgeon—one of the greatest English surgeons, one of the greatest surgeons of any time or any country—came to a close with the death of Sir Spencer Wells. Sir Spencer Wells, at all events, had lived his life. He was in his seventy-ninth year when he died. His life might be divided, as it was well said at the time, into three parts: the years of his early struggles, the years during which he fought his way to success as a genuine benefactor of humanity, and the years of well-earned honours and rewards. The honour and reward which he prized more than any other was the knowledge that he had saved the lives of thousands of women who, but for his courage, his skill and his genius, must have untimely perished. The peculiar operation with which the name of Sir Spencer Wells will for ever be associated was not a discovery of his own. It had come down to him as an idea from other great surgeons, who, however, had not the courage or the skill to carry it into regular practice. Spencer Wells studied the subject thoroughly, and he made up his mind that he had the brain, the nerve, and the hand to carry it to success. He was at first denounced in many of the English medical journals as if he were either a quack or a wanton experimenter on the

frames of women. One can hardly imagine a more thoroughly heroic courage than that which enables a man to persevere with his beneficent purpose in the face of such opposition. It is easy to die in the battle-field; any fellow can die in the battle-field; but to persevere in a course of surgery which even one's own professional brothers declare to be futile and wanton torture needs indomitable courage and strength of mind indeed. Spencer Wells persevered, and soon, to quote the words of *Punch*, applied to a different man, 'he heard the hisses turn to cheers.' He not only saved the lives of hundreds of women, but he showed the way by which the lives of countless thousands of women were to be saved. In all branches of his profession he took the deepest interest, and he might indeed have risen to supreme success in any department of surgery which he had made up his mind to follow. He died quietly on the Riviera, having accomplished all the work he wanted to do, and having made a new epoch in the art of the surgeon.

On Saturday, February 6, 1897, the London morning papers contained an account of a most interesting and touching appeal made by the Prince of Wales to the public in general on the subject of a becoming and appropriate method to celebrate the sixtieth year of the Queen's reign. 'Having ascertained from the Queen,' said the Prince of Wales, 'that she has no wish to express a preference for any one of the many proposals loyally suggested for commemorating, nationally or locally, the sixtieth year

of her reign, I feel at liberty to bring to the notice of the inhabitants of the Metropolis a project lying very near my heart, its object being to attach the sentiment of gratitude for the blessings which the country has enjoyed during the last sixty years to a scheme of permanent beneficence.' That scheme, as the Prince went on to say, concerned the finances of the hospitals of London, which had long been a source of deep anxiety. There are in London 122 hospitals and convalescent homes. 'An analysis furnished me of the audited statements of account for the year 1895 of 122 metropolitan hospitals and convalescent homes shows a deficiency of 70,000*l.* as compared with the ordinary expenditure; while, if we limit the figures to institutions which failed to meet their outgoings, the deficiency is increased to 102,500*l.* The contributors, it appears, to the funds of the London hospitals number less than one in a hundred of the London population. If,' said the Prince, 'we divide the population of the metropolitan district into two portions and agree that one moiety is unable to contribute anything, there still remain 3,000,000 persons, representing (say) 500,000 households. Of these, 450,000 households, at least so far as can be ascertained, do not contribute anything towards the support of hospitals. If we then assume that one half are unwilling or unable to acknowledge either privilege or duty in this matter, an average annual subscription of no more than 10*s.* each from the remainder will suffice.' With this prelude the Prince came to his point. 'I have asked

the co-operation of the representative Committee whose names are appended, and I propose with their assistance to invite subscriptions of 1*s.* per annum and upwards from all classes for "The Prince of Wales's Hospital Fund for London to Commemorate the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Queen's Reign."'

Certainly it seems to us that no happier form could be found for the celebration of such a jubilee. Pageants and street processions, and the marching of regiments and the waving of banners and the clangour of military music, and the adornment of houses and the blaze of illuminations make altogether a very natural and popular form of celebrating a great event in the history of a nation or a State. But the appeal from the Prince of Wales for a metropolitan or national contribution to the metropolitan hospitals and convalescent homes seems to us quietly to outshine all these brilliant demonstrations of national gratitude. It is impossible to imagine that the powers above, if we may look at the whole question from that point of view, would not be better pleased with the maintenance of hospitals for the poor and sick, the dying and the recovering, than with any amount of splendour in semi-barbaric processions. The almost universal feeling of the country went out in answer to the appeal of the Prince of Wales. It was felt also, that although the appeal was only made on behalf of the hospitals of London, it would find a ready and cordial answer from all the great provincial cities and towns of Great Britain. Some of these cities and towns are, with regard to the

proportionate numbers of their population, much more advanced and energetic than vast, divided, half-apathetic London could claim to be. The general idea, therefore, was that the sounding note struck by the Prince of Wales in the metropolis would be a call to arms in the philanthropic sense to all the great English and Scotch and Welsh communities.

There were, however, some few notes of criticism and even of dissent. Certain critics contended that the whole system on which our hospital arrangements were founded was in itself a thorough mistake and a failure. There ought to be no question of charity and of beggary, these writers—there were very few of them—contended. The hospitals ought to be all under the control of the existing authorities and ought to be sustained out of public funds, whether taxes or rates. They ought to be public institutions whose managers would be held responsible by Parliament and by Government for the proper management of their affairs. Now, there is no doubt that if we come to consider merely a fundamental principle there is a good deal to be said for this theory. Some public hospitals are very badly managed; many have to be badly managed because of the want of money wherewith to manage them well. The public in general is inclined to be lax as regards charitable contributions. Here and there every now and then some rich and benevolent man or woman contributes largely to the support of this or that hospital. But the ordinary man or woman is commonly absorbed in the duties and obligations which are nearest and

immediate, and is apt to think that a contribution to some East-end hospital might be thought of at a future date. Then, again, there is in the minds of many people a sort of sensitive objection to any kind of hospital supported merely by private charity. The present writer was once shown over a great asylum for the reception of the deaf and dumb in one of the smaller cities of Canada. The governor or manager of the asylum, who was taking the pains to point out its merits, wound up by saying: 'And the great thing is, that there is not a rag of charity about it. It is a public institution, supported by the public rates, and everyone who has to come here feels that he has a perfect right to come without depending on the favour or the mercy of anybody.' There is a great deal to be said for this sort of feeling, and we in these countries have long left behind the old days of the early Manchester School, when the theory was that everything, not merely the care of the sick and the blind and the deaf and the dumb, but even the delivery of letters by the post-office, ought to be relegated to private enterprise and private energy. All the same, it seems to us that the Prince of Wales's appeal was timely and appropriate, and was sure to meet with a genuine national response. After all, the great metropolitan and provincial hospitals cannot be allowed to fall into ruin or even to fail in any of their great duties while we are considering the best manner of revolutionising the whole of the hospital system. How long should we, as a people, be inter-

mittently discussing this question before we came to any decision of a general character upon it, and how long would it be, even after we had come to a general decision, before we found time to carry that decision into parliamentary effect? There are reforms about which it would hardly be too much to say that the whole country is agreed, and have nevertheless been waiting for a quarter of a century or even half a century to get a chance of being brought into operation. Besides, it has fairly to be said that the greater interest we can rouse, the larger the amount of sympathy we can attract, to the manner in which our hospitals are crippled by want of sufficient funds, the more likely is it that the public conscience will ask itself whether the present precarious and eleemosynary conditions are the best on which such institutions ought to have to rely. For ourselves, we are convinced that if one looks at the whole question only from that comparatively narrow point of view, the appeal of the Prince of Wales is likely to do immense public service. The question for the moment is how to obtain accommodation enough for the sick and the maimed who can find no suitable accommodation in their own homes, and let us all think out the while whether there is not some better system which could be established in the future. The spread of the hospital system, whether it be supported by taxes or by rates or by private charity, is one of the greatest public blessings of modern times. Its benefit does not apply to the very poor only—to those, for instance, who live in

squalid garrets or hovels, and who must either go to the workhouse or die in their miserable sick beds at home. It applies also to a vast number of households where actual pauperism does not exist, but where there is no possibility of giving to an invalid the nourishment, the medicine, and the skilled care and nursing which he absolutely needs in order to his recovery. Therefore, from whatever side of the question we regard it, the appeal of the Prince of Wales seems to have been conceived in a wise as well as in a sympathetic spirit, and no way could surely be found of doing better honour to the sixtieth year of Queen Victoria's reign than by obtaining generous and munificent public support for institutions which, in the words of Goethe, already quoted, 'lighten the load of the heavily laden.'

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SOUTH AFRICA COMMITTEE.

On Tuesday, February 16, 1897, the South Africa Committee, as it was called—that is, the Parliamentary Committee appointed by the House of Commons to inquire into the circumstances attending the Jameson Raid and the disturbances in British South Africa—was opened for actual business in a great room off Westminster Hall. The members of the Committee were: Mr. William L. Jackson, who had held important office in Conservative Governments, as chairman; Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary; Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Sir William Harcourt, Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons; Sir Richard Webster, Attorney-General; Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Labouchere, Sir William Hart Dyke, Mr. John Ellis, Mr. Sydney Buxton, Mr. Edward Blake, Mr. Bigham, Mr. Cripps, Mr. Wharton, and Mr. George Wyndham. The terms of reference adopted by the House were: 'To inquire into the origin and circumstances of the incursion into the South African Republic by an armed force, and into the administration of the British South Africa Company,

and to report thereon; and, further, to report what alterations are desirable in the government of the territories under the control of the Company.' The Committee were allowed to hear counsel to such extent as they should see fit, and did, in fact, allow counsel to attend on behalf of those most directly interested in the inquiry; and, of course, power was given to the Committee, according to the technical parliamentary phrase, to send for 'persons, papers, and records.' It must be remembered that there had been an inquiry by the Cape Colony Parliament into the circumstances affecting the Colony in connection with Dr. Jameson's raid. Naturally the main object of that inquiry was directed to the part taken by Mr. Rhodes, who was then Prime Minister of the Colony. It is of some importance to set out precisely the finding of this Parliamentary Committee. The Committee declared that, 'As regards the Right Honourable C. J. Rhodes, he was thoroughly acquainted with the preparations that led to the inroad, and that in his capacity as controller of the three great joint-stock companies—the British South Africa Company, the De Beers Consolidated Mines, and the Gold Fields of South Africa—he directed and controlled the combination which rendered such a proceeding as the Jameson Raid possible. It still remains to consider Mr. Rhodes's position with regard to Dr. Jameson's entry into the South African Republic at the precise time when he did. There is no evidence that Mr. Rhodes ever contemplated that the force of Pitsani Camp should at any time invade

the Transvaal uninvited. It appears rather to have been intended to support a movement from within, and Dr. Jameson was repeatedly counselled to wait until the arrangements were complete. At the same time there is an absence of any such peremptory command from Mr. Rhodes direct to Dr. Jameson, not on any account to take action, as might reasonably have been expected from one resolutely determined to do all in his power to prevent a subordinate officer from committing a gross breach of the law. It would appear that Mr. Rhodes did not direct or approve of Dr. Jameson's entering the territory of the South African Republic at the precise time when he did do so, but your Committee cannot find that that fact relieves Mr. Rhodes from responsibility for the unfortunate occurrences which took place. Even if Dr. Jameson be primarily responsible for the last fatal step, Mr. Rhodes cannot escape the responsibility of a movement which had been arranged, with his concurrence, to take place at the precise time it did, if circumstances had been favourable at Johannesburg.'

The Committee of the Cape Parliament did not directly make inquiries into the relations of the Colonial Office, the Chartered Company, and what we may call 'the party of action' in Johannesburg. The allegation made against the Colonial Office was that the Colonial Secretary and his officials knew more about the intended invasion of the South African Republic than was made known to Parliament. As regards the Chartered Company, the inquiry would, of course, deal with the question

whether the power of such a company should be allowed any longer to exist, and whether her Majesty's Government ought not to take upon itself the right, the duty, and the responsibility of administering the affairs of that part of South Africa over which the Chartered Company's jurisdiction at present extends. It will be seen, therefore, that the keenest possible interest was felt by the public in the opening of the South Africa Committee.

The interest, of course, was deepened by the fact that the first witness called was Mr. Cecil Rhodes himself. The difficulty of writing history, even contemporary history, with perfect fidelity to fact and nature may be illustrated by the different opinions which were formed by persons, apparently alike competent and impartial, as to the bearing of Mr. Rhodes under the first examination of Sir William Harcourt. Some of those who were present and have put their views on record described his bearing as perfectly cool, collected, dignified, and statesmanlike. Others, again, spoke of him, so far as his bearing and manner were concerned, as petulant, underbred, eccentric, and sometimes even offensive. Mr. Rhodes, when sworn and having taken his seat at the witnesses' table, expressed a wish to read from a document which he said would practically cover his whole case. It is only fair that the whole of the document should be quoted here. 'From the date,' it said, 'of the establishment of the gold industry on a large scale at Johannesburg, much discontent has been caused by the restrictions and impositions placed upon it by the Transvaal Government; by the

corrupt administration of that Government; and by the denial of civil rights to the rapidly growing Uitlander population. This discontent has gradually but steadily increased, and a considerable time ago I learned from my intercourse with many of the leading persons in Johannesburg that the position of affairs there had become intolerable. After long efforts they despaired of obtaining redress by constitutional means, and were resolved to seek by extra-constitutional means such a change in the government of the South African Republic as should give to the majority of the population, possessing more than half the land, nine-tenths of the wealth, and paying nineteen-twentieths of the taxes in the country, a due share in its administration. I sympathised with and, as one largely interested in the Transvaal, shared in these grievances; and further, as a citizen of the Cape Colony, I felt that the persistently unfriendly attitude of the Government of the South African Republic towards the Colony was the great obstacle to common action for practical purposes among the various States of South Africa. Under these circumstances I assisted the movement in Johannesburg with my purse and influence. Further, acting within my rights, in the autumn of 1895 I placed on territory under the administration of the British South Africa Company on the borders of the Transvaal, a body of troops under Dr. Jameson, prepared to act in the Transvaal in certain eventualities. I did not communicate these views to the Board of Directors of the British South Africa Company. With reference to the

Jameson Raid, I may state that Dr. Jameson went in without my authority. Having said this, I desire to add that I am willing generally to accept the finding as to facts contained in the report of the Committee of Cape Colony. I must add that in all my actions I was greatly influenced by my belief that the policy of the present Government of the South African Republic was to introduce the influence of another foreign Power into the already complicated system of South Africa, and thereby render more difficult in the future the closer union of the different States.'

Now, whatever one may come to think of the policy and the action of Mr. Cecil Rhodes, it must be owned that that statement seems to be full, clear, candid, and consistent. The Chairman of the Committee asked whether there was anything else that Mr. Rhodes desired to add to that statement, and Mr. Rhodes quietly said no. He had indeed presented to the Committee what must be called a State paper of great historical importance. Of course there were other questions to be considered, as well as the question of Mr. Rhodes's own personal motive and action, but it cannot be doubted that the reading of that paper produced a decidedly favourable impression on the Committee. Mr. Rhodes, of course, had an immense number of worshippers in this country as well as in South Africa. On the other hand, for one reason or another he had created a strong and bitter feeling against him. To the minds of many persons he showed simply as a self-seeking adventurer inspired merely by the lust for gold and the passion of power. Fiction of the day had dealt

somewhat harshly with him. In three or four popular novels, at least, he had been presented as the central figure under the thinnest disguise, and one novel was only worse than another in picturing him as the reckless, heartless money-grabber and slave-driver.

Dr. Jameson was afterwards examined as a witness, and he, too, handed in voluntarily a statement on his own behalf. The proceedings were followed with intense interest by the public; and much wonder was excited by the frank recognition of the curious manner in which servants of the British Government at the Cape had allowed themselves to withhold from Lord Rosmead (then Sir Hercules Robinson) all knowledge of the details, with which they were perfectly acquainted, concerning the movement of Dr. Jameson, and the more or less qualified encouragement given to it by Mr. Cecil Rhodes.

The work of the Committee thus hopefully begun came to nothing, or next to nothing, in the end. The most important witnesses were not cross-examined; no pressure was brought to bear to compel the production of a telegraphic correspondence which every one assumed to be of vital interest to the public. No one can believe that on the part of the Committee there was any desire to screen high-placed offenders, but there certainly was too easy an assumption of the innocence of all accused persons. On some critical questions Mr. Blake and Mr. Labouchere alone voted for the pressing of the inquiry home. Public interest in the doings of the Committee soon wore out, and the busy world went its way.

CHAPTER XXV

BLONDIN—NANSEN—THE PENRHYN QUARRIES—
THE EDUCATION BILL

THE London journals of Tuesday, February 23, 1897, reported the death of Blondin, the famous rope-walker, at whom for a time all the world wondered. He had been for some later years living in his home, which he called Niagara House, at Ealing, near London, and he died in his seventy-third year. He stuck to his craft almost up to his death, and exhibited his tight-rope feats so lately as the August of 1896. Whatever we may think of tight-rope feats we must all admit that it is something to be perfect master of one's craft, and there never was a tight-rope walker worthy to be named in the same breath with Blondin. It may be observed, by the way, that Blondin was not his real name. He was a Frenchman, born near Calais, the son of a professional acrobat, who had been a soldier of the Great Napoleon. Blondin's real name was Jean François Gravelot, but when he had made up his mind to follow a rope-walking career, and was invited to go on a professional tour in the United States, he and his friends thought it would be impossible to work such a name into an attractive programme. The

shorter and simpler appellation of Blondin was therefore invented for him, and was suggested by his complexion and the colour of his hair. His most daring feat was that of crossing the rapids at Niagara just where the great cataract takes its plunge. He crossed Niagara, it is said, more than three hundred times, and even crossed his rope there on stilts. Then he began touring all over the world, establishing his fame wherever he went. He made his first appearance in London at the Crystal Palace, and he had already won such a renown that people rushed to see him who had never cared to look at a tight-rope walker before. His earliest performances at the Crystal Palace were on a rope very high up from the floor, and a fall must have meant his death. It was not merely that he trod the tight-rope with perfect safety and success, but that he performed all manner of pranks in the course of his crossing. At his first exhibition in the Crystal Palace he created utter consternation amongst the vast audience, and brought out many cries of alarm and pity and horror, when he affected to slip off the rope and came sitting astride on it for a moment and then turned under it, head downwards, and leaped on to it again, and smiled and bowed to the audience and went his way as if nothing particular had happened. He often crossed the rope with a heavy sack over his head. He used to carry a stove and cook an omelette on his way across the narrow path of thread. He used to wheel people across in a barrow. He wheeled his little daughter once in this

way while the child scattered flowers on the up-gazing crowd below. But the police interfered with this performance on the ground that, even if he had a right to risk his own limbs and life, he had no right to risk the limbs and life of one of his children. Indeed, in London there were restrictions put on his performance which were not imposed on him in many other places. Once in Liverpool, in the Zoological Gardens, he wheeled across his rope a lion made fast in his barrow, and he horrified the spectators by affecting at one moment to be losing his control of the cradle containing the king of the forests. Readers of the present day can have little idea of the sensation which all this sort of thing created in England and everywhere else. Such readers, however, can find out enough about him if they will only turn back to the numbers of *Punch* published at the time, and there indeed they will find him, to use the colloquial phrase, 'all over the place.' He never had a rival in modern days. It is not likely that he ever had a rival in the whole history of his craft. He loved the rope-walking business 'with a love that was more than love.' Every right-minded person, as the phrase goes, must feel regret that so much public delight should be felt in performances merely intended to startle and shock and horrify. Yet we must take account of the fact that in all ages and in all countries the vast majority of people have delighted in such exhibitions. After all, there is something naturally attractive, even to minds not

vulgar, in seeing how a man can completely train his nerves, his strength, and his skill to accomplish in safety feats that to other men would be utterly impossible. Of later years, even the most humane and sensitive persons became satisfied that Blondin, constituted as he was, put himself in no real danger at all. He never met with a serious accident. He never broke a bone. He never even hurt himself to any considerable extent. In his own business he stood absolutely alone.

London in the early weeks of 1897 was favoured by the presence of a lion of the season, the most leonine and commanding who had been seen there for many years, far more popularly attractive than Li Hung Chang, the Chinese statesman, who came to London in the dead season of 1896. This was Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, the famous Norwegian explorer, on whose visit to the regions of the North Pole the attention of Europe and all the civilised world had for a long time been riveted. Nansen was a born Viking, and he made the most successful raid upon the Polar regions that had been accomplished in our time. He did not, as a matter of fact, go out with the purpose of finding the exact position of the North Pole. That exact position seemed to him a matter of comparative unimportance. His main purpose was to explore the Polar seas, and to find out whether there was not a powerful current which would drive a vessel towards the Pole if only the vessel were built strongly enough to withstand the impact of the ice. He found that things were exactly as he had

anticipated, and he therefore accomplished the very work he had set forth to do. He had, of course, the most trying experience in the way of privation, want of food, cold, solitude, and what distressed him as a cleanly Norwegian very much, the entire giving out of his supply of soap. He carried great qualities with him on his expedition. His heart, to begin with, was in his work. Then he had a thoroughly artistic love of the northern skies and the northern ice. Some of his descriptions of the beautiful Arctic night which are contained in the record of his expedition are positively poetic. 'The proud lines of thy throat,' he says to the northern night, 'thy shoulders' curves, are so noble, but O! so unbendingly cold: thy bosom's white chastity is feelingless as the snowy ice. Chaste, beautiful and proud, thou floatest through ether over the frozen sea, thy glittering garment, woven of aurora beams, covering the vault of heaven.' One is reminded of a poetical and beautiful passage in Jean Paul Richter, in which he apostrophises the Arctic night which he never saw, and, in rapture of admiration, tells how, though the day be livid and colourless, yet the night brings back the poetry of existence and of colour, and illumines the skies with stars and fire, and so reminds the men on the frozen earth of the bright heaven which arches above them.

It is needless to say that Nansen had an enthusiastic reception in London. He was entertained at many public dinners, and he delivered a lecture to the Royal Geographical Society, after which the

Prince of Wales presented him with the Society's gold medal, especially made in his honour. The meeting of the Geographical Society had to be held in the vast Albert Hall, as no other place in London could possibly accommodate the number of persons who were eager to see and hear the great northern explorer. The latest great gathering of the kind had been held in the same hall to welcome Mr. Henry M. Stanley on his return from his greatest African expedition. Dr. Nansen addressed his audience in fluent and almost perfect English, only his accent here and there betraying his foreign birth and bringing up. He had addressed the Royal Geographical Society some years before, just as he was about to start on his adventures, and he had then explained that his object was not merely to get to the exact position of the North Pole, but to verify the theories which he had formed. He published a book giving an account of all that he saw and found and felt and suffered, which had an enormous circulation in England, and, indeed, it is needless to say, all over the world. He remained but a short time in London, and gave no indication as to the plans of his life for the future. No stranger since the far-off days when Garibaldi visited England ever received a greater demonstration of welcome than Dr. Nansen did; and of course in the case of Garibaldi there were popular sentiments and even passions which made his welcome a clamour and a tumult. In Dr. Nansen's case it was simply a popular and a national tribute to genius, patience, energy, daring, and

success. There would seem to be a peculiar fascination about the exploring of the 'boreal realms of the Pole,' as Edgar Allan Poe puts it. Certainly such undertakings have always had a peculiar attraction for the people of these islands. Since the days of Sir John Franklin, and since long before those days, no hero can get a more cordial welcome here than the hero of a Polar expedition. There is something poetical, illusory, futile about the undertaking, which would appear to commend itself to the dreamier qualities of even the most prosaic mind. There is nothing in particular to come of it, even if we were to find the exact position of what we call the North Pole. There is no money to be made, there are no gold mines nor diamond mines to be got at. There are no territories to be annexed. There are no kingdoms to be conquered, as Carlyle says, from the barren realms of darkness. The world would remain practically just the same after we had ascertained the exact position of the North Pole as before we settled it. The settlement would have no more practical influence on our affairs than has the fact that astronomic science enables us now to watch the melting of the snow around the Poles of Mars. But there is something on the whole elevating and inspiring in the thought that humanity can be thus profoundly interested in the pursuit of a knowledge which is not even supposed to bring the slightest practical gain. We have seldom had a lion of a season in London more worthy of the welcome he got than was Dr. Nansen. Some people

could not help comparing the reception which Nansen got with that which was given in the former year to Li Hung Chang, and which has been already noticed in this chapter. Both men came rather at a wrong time. Li Hung Chang came too late in that season and Dr. Nansen came too early in the season after. But the general feeling about the Chinese statesman was one rather of puzzle and amusement than of genuine admiration. Few people knew what he had done or cared whether he had or had not put down a rebellion in China. The papers recorded his movements, and the public in general smiled a broad smile at the record. He did not appeal to us. We thought him rather an oddity and a figure of fun, and were much amused by the skill with which he baffled interviewers by putting all manner of questions himself and so leaving no time for anyone to extract any manner of opinion from him. London rose at Nansen. His was the very sort of character and career which captivates a great sea-born nation. It has been said that the Greek poets and the English poets alone in literature are enraptured by the beauty and the delight of the sea. It has been well-declared of the Greeks of to-day that on the mainland and in the islands every man is a born sailor. But very much the same might surely be said of the Norseman. Sweden and Norway are full of the passion and the poetry of the sea. Therefore Nansen, the successful explorer of Arctic waters, found a sympathetic welcome from every heart in these countries. Ancestral and reciprocal memories passed into that welcome, and Nansen carried with him when he left this country

the best wishes of all its population for his future career and for his future success.

A very singular question, involving the relations between capital and labour, came up in the year 1897. Perhaps nothing of exactly the same kind had been brought into the public notice in England before. Sir George Osborne Morgan moved for a copy of the whole correspondence, and it tells the story better than the present writer can do. On January 20, 1897, there was issued a Parliamentary paper from the Board of Trade called 'Lord Penrhyn's Quarries' (correspondence), further stated to be a copy 'of all correspondence between the Board of Trade, Lord Penrhyn, and the workmen employed at his slate quarries at Bethesda near Bangor, relating to the labour dispute which has arisen at such slate-quarries.' The first letter in the correspondence is to the Secretary of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade, and comes from the organising secretary of the North Wales Quarrymen's Union. The letter sets out that at its meeting on the Saturday before September 30, 1896, 'the Council of the Union considered and adopted a resolution of the Penrhyn Quarry Committee asking that the attention of the Board of Trade be called to the dispute between them and their employer, the Right Honourable Lord Penrhyn, with the view of seeking its intervention under the second clause of the Conciliation (Trades Disputes) Act, 1896. On Monday, before the above resolution had been forwarded to the Board of Trade, each member of the Committee (Penrhyn Quarry) that had hitherto carried on all

the negotiations between the men and their employer, together with other persons, whose names had transpired in the correspondence, received a notice to the following effect from the chief manager, Mr. E. A. Young: "I have to inform you that you are hereby suspended till further notice, as and from the end of this quarry month, namely, Tuesday night, 28th instant." The immediate effect of this has been to precipitate a conflict which the Committee had done all in its power to prevent. The men, looking upon this as a direct blow at the principle of combination, on Monday evening held a mass meeting, when the following resolution was passed unanimously: "That this meeting of the workmen at Cae-braich-y-Cafn (Penrhyn Quarry), understanding that our representatives on the Committee have been suspended from to-morrow night until an indefinite period, resolves that it is our duty also as workmen to cease work until we have received an explanation of this action on the part of the management."

The men abided by their resolution, and the result of it was that nearly three thousand men were left idle. The whole question simply was one whether, according to the old formula, a man has a right to do whatever he likes with his own. Lord Penrhyn was the owner of the slate quarries, and he could not quite get on with his working-men. He therefore fell back upon his right to close the slate quarries, and to suspend their operation just as he thought fit. He could not agree to the terms which his workmen asked, and therefore he thought it was

perfectly right to let the slate quarries remain absolutely unworked. Now, it must be clear to everybody that no such natural right exists for any landlord whatever. Pass any laws you will, accumulate any statutes as you will, yet you cannot possibly put into the hands of any landlord the right to make barren the land over which he holds a nominal ownership. The first great claim in the world is the right that the resources of civilisation shall be used to the uttermost for the benefit of the whole of humanity. Now, it seems to us that the action of Lord Penrhyn was distinctly in opposition to this universal law. Because Lord Penrhyn could not agree with his working hands as to the terms of their service, he appears to have made up his mind to close his works altogether, and to get rid not only of the slate-mining labourers but of the slate-mining labours themselves. This seems to us to carry the idea of proprietorship a great deal too far. Indeed, it appears to point, distantly, perhaps, but still not indistinctly, to a time when the State will have to step in and say that your claims as a proprietor are wholly opposed to the general law of the public, and that either you must give way or the rights of the State must give way. It is outside the course of all reason to hold that a man who possesses slate quarries, let us say, or coal mines, as it might be, or diamond mines, or any other treasures of civilisation, should be entitled to shut off the whole public from the advantages he possesses, merely because he gets into a quarrel with his working-men. No society could hold together under conditions like that, and Lord Penrhyn's

course seemed for a time as if it were directly carried on in the face of growing intelligence and civilisation in England. The agitation was not very strong in the country, at least in those parts of the country which the trouble did not directly affect. People in general felt certain that Lord Penrhyn would have to submit himself in the end, and so the whole struggle went on with a curious public interest but without much actual dismay. The question was new and peculiar, but it did not seem to involve much real practical difficulty. It seemed wholly impossible that Lord Penrhyn could set up an entirely new principle in economic affairs, or that he could revolutionise the whole system of business relations between men and men. Therefore people waited patiently to see the breakdown.

Lord Penrhyn was not accused by anybody of being a harsh or domineering master of workmen. The men themselves admitted that he was kindly, well-wishing and earnest about the comfort of those whom he employed, but he had got hold of certain ideas which he apparently regarded as conscientious principles, and he stuck to these without any concession. So the principle dragged on until on August 18, 1897, it was arranged between the representative of Lord Penrhyn and the representatives of the men that—The grievances of any *employé*, crew, or class shall be submitted by him or them in the first instance to the local manager. If dissatisfied with the decision of the local manager, then the said grievances shall be submitted to the chief manager, either personally or by deputation, consisting of not more than five

employés selected from the same class as the person or persons aggrieved, who must be included in the deputation. Grievances in which the *employés* generally are interested, or which they may adopt on behalf of an *employé*, crew, or class who have submitted their grievances under the preceding clause and are dissatisfied, can again be submitted to the chief manager by a deputation consisting of not more than six *employés* appointed in such manner as the workmen may deem advisable. In a similar manner, in all cases of importance, an appeal may be made to Lord Penrhyn, either by the individual or by a deputation, against the decision of the chief manager. Suitable Rybelwyr will be given monthly bargains without delay as soon as the management find it practicable. The letting of contracts to be left in the hands of the management, who engage all persons employed, and see that each *employé* receives his just ratio of wage. Previous to the cessation of work the average wage paid to the quarrymen was 5*s.* 6*d.* per day, other piecework classes being in proportion—viz., badrockmen 4*s.* 7*d.* and labourers 3*s.* 7*d.* When work is resumed this same basis will be continued so long as trade permits. All the late *employés* who desire work in the Penrhyn Quarry will be readmitted in a body as far as is practicable, and the remainder as soon as work can be arranged for them.

Up to the adjournment for the Easter holidays the House of Commons had done little or nothing. The new Education Bill turned out to be but a small sort of measure. It was started with the name of 'A Bill to provide for a grant out of the Exchequer in

aid of voluntary elementary schools and for the exemption from rates of those schools, and to repeal part of Section 19 of the Elementary Education Act, 1875.' Some curious interest was roused by the fact that the Bill was prepared and brought in by Mr. Balfour, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Gorst, and the Solicitor-General. The House of Commons found a good deal of fun in the fact that Sir John Gorst's name was on the back of the Bill. Everybody in the House of Commons knew that Sir John Gorst did not care anything about the Bill, and everybody also knew that he had been deliberately shut out by his colleagues from taking any important part in the discussions on the measure. The Leader of the Government in the House of Commons had resolutely shoved—there is no other word for it—Sir John Gorst aside from any leading part in the debates upon the measure. The House of Commons was greatly amused and deeply interested for that reason, if for nothing else, in the whole progress of the debate. The Bill proposed to provide for a grant out of the Exchequer in aid of voluntary elementary schools. The first clause of the Bill provided that, for aiding voluntary schools, there should be annually paid out of moneys provided by Parliament an aid grant, not exceeding in the aggregate five shillings per scholar for the whole number of scholars in those schools. The second clause provided that the grant should be distributed by the Education Department to such voluntary schools and in such manner and amounts as the Department think best for the purpose of helping necessitous schools, and increasing

their efficiency, while at the same time keeping due regard to the maintenance of voluntary contributions. Another section declared that if associations of schools are constituted in such manner, in such areas and with such governing bodies representative of the managers as are approved by the Education Department, there shall be allotted to each association while so approved a share of the aid grant to be computed according to the number of scholars at the rate of five shillings for each scholar, or, if the Department should fix different rates for town and country schools, which they are by this measure empowered to do, then at those rates, and a corresponding share of any sum which may be available out of the aid grant after distribution has been made to unassociated schools. The share allotted to each such association was to be distributed by the Education Department. After consulting the governing body of the Association, and in accordance with any scheme prepared by that body which the Department for the time being might approve, other parts of the measure provided that the Education Department might exclude a school from any share of the grant if, in the opinion of the Department, it unreasonably refused or failed to join such an association, but it was added, that the refusal or failure should not be deemed unreasonable if the majority of schools in the association should belong to a religious denomination to which the one particular school did not itself belong. The Bill defined that unless the context otherwise required, the expression 'voluntary school' means a public elementary day school not provided by a school board, and that the expression

'local rate' means a rate the proceeds of which are applicable to public local purposes and which is leviable on the basis of an assessment in respect of the yearly value of property, and includes any sum which, though obtained in the first instance by a precept, certificate or other instrument requiring payment from some authority or officer, is or can be ultimately raised out of a local rate as before defined. The measure was not to extend to Scotland or Ireland. The measure was passed into law and was understood to be simply an instalment of other measures. Up to the time of Parliament's adjournment for the Easter recess it was about the only serious accomplishment which legislation had achieved. There was, indeed, in the House of Commons one highly important debate on the financial relations of Great Britain and Ireland. Two speeches in that debate might fairly be described as important in the history of our modern Parliament. By a curious chance they happened to be both on the same side. One was by Mr. Edward Blake and the other by Sir Edward Clarke, who had time after time held office under a Tory Government. Mr. Blake had held a leading position for many years in the Dominion Parliament of Canada. He was of Irish origin, and had given up his Canadian position, a really great position, to fight for the cause of Home Rule in the Imperial Parliament. Sir Edward Clarke, of course, as we know, had made all his distinction in Parliament as a Conservative, and was and is one of the most brilliant debaters in the House of Commons. On this occasion Mr. Blake and Sir Edward Clarke found themselves side by side. The whole

affair was an event in the history of the House of Commons, and was naturally regarded with the deepest interest. At least it formed a tribute to the occasional justice of feeling of the House of Commons which inspires a great debater on one side of the House to admit the justice of the case put forward by a great debater on the other side.

This volume cannot better be closed than with the mention of the fact that all London, and, indeed, all Great Britain, went into joyous preparations for the celebration of the year—for the celebration of what, by some kind of sudden and common instinct, it was determined to call the 'Diamond Jubilee.' There are events yet to occur in the reign of the Queen, a reign which we all hope may still be prolonged over many years. But the reign so far has given its measure, and no one can deny that on the whole it has been a reign of great success. It has been, as we have shown, a reign productive of reform in political, in economical, and in social life. Especially we should say it has been successful in domestic reform and in domestic advancement. About the policy of some of our foreign wars, our annexations, our expansions of territory, the writer of this book has never hesitated to express his full and frank opinion. But the advance of political and social reform has been so clear and so beneficent as to give little or no chance to the most carping controversialist. No one could possibly say that Queen Victoria does not find a happier Great Britain now

than she found when she came to the throne, hardly more than a child, in 1837. Never once during her time has the strength of the monarchy been shaken, or even threatened. Many monarchies, and even some republics, have gone down within that time. The French Republic of 1848 was upset by Louis Napoleon, and the empire of Louis Napoleon went down on the battlefield of Sedan. A German Empire has been founded, although not exactly on the ruins of the Holy Roman Empire; and Austria has been driven outside the sphere of Germany. Italy has become one single kingdom, and Greece is at the present moment thrilling to complete what she not unnaturally thinks her national destiny. The Empire of Brazil is gone, and a sort of Republican Government works along its way in the place of the deposed sovereignty. But the monarchical system of Great Britain has not been seriously threatened in the slightest way since Queen Victoria came to the throne. Of course, nobody could suppose for a moment that all this was owing to any inspiration or any effort of the Queen herself. But it may be assumed, and it must be assumed, that the wisdom with which, as a constitutional sovereign, she discharged her duties, and acted in the end on the advice of her ministers, has had much to do with the stability of the Empire and the rule.

This is a history of a time, and not of a sovereign, but it would be unjust even to the history of the time not to give a word of praise to the steady, constitutional action of the Sovereign.

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PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO. LTD., NEW-STREET SQUARE
LONDON